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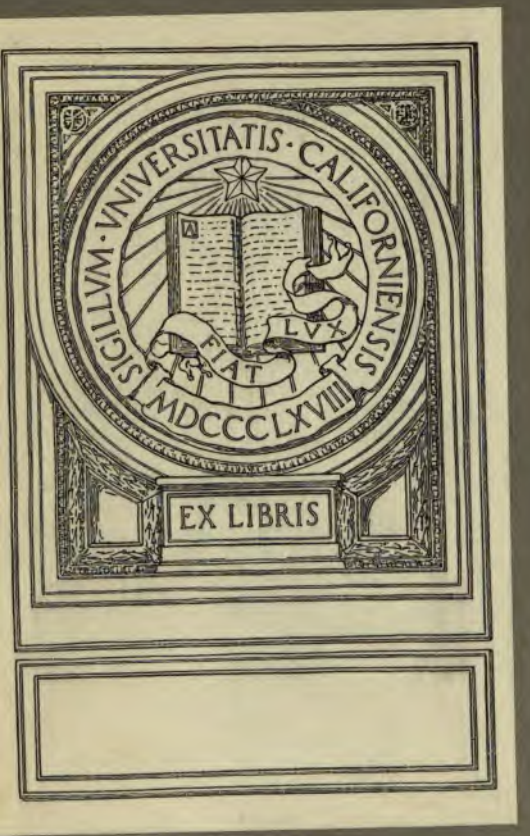
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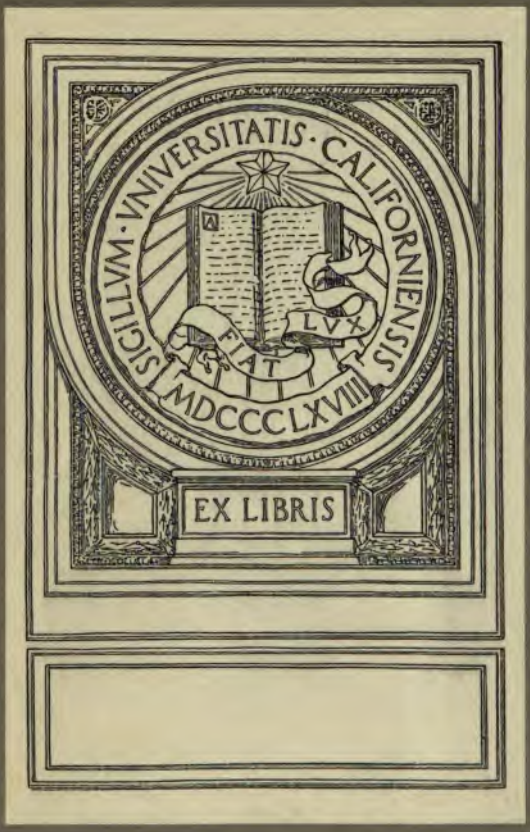
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# WHAT I SAW IN RUSSIA

BY

GEORGE LANSBURY

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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# INTRODUCTION

In this book George Lansbury shows the effects upon Russia and the Russian people of the Allied policy of war, intrigue and economic blockade. It is, perhaps, not understood clearly enough by the general public that the blockade prevents Russia from getting not only machinery and food, but that medical and surgical supplies are prevented from entering the country. As a result, while hunger is general in the large cities, involving the underfeeding of children, and the actual semi-starvation of adults, the national health in city, town and village is in desperate jeopardy.

Mr. Lansbury tells how, for instance, Allied soldiers, in common with Russian, who have fallen prisoners into the hands of the Soviet Government, have had to suffer for months from neglected wounds, and undergo major operations without anæsthetics because there were none in the country. Furthermore, without medical and sanitary supplies, diseases have become endemic in Russia, the public health of the entire nation being in jeopardy, and tens of thousands of actual preventable deaths occurring.

Mr. Lansbury, it will be noted, raises a question concerning the Red Cross. As an international organization founded to administer relief and afford medical aid impartially wherever its services can be utilized, it has been supported by voluntary contributions from the people of the whole world.



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It is non-national, non-political, and purely humanitarian in its origin, its organization and profession. But as a fact it has ceased to be all of these, according to Mr. Lansbury, who found that, while it was active in Poland, amounting, one gathers, practically to the Army Medical Corps for the Polish Army, it has refused aid of any kind to Russia. Mr. Lansbury raises the question as to whether the people should not refuse to give it further support until the Red Cross resumes its proper functions and ceases to operate as a political and partizan agency.

Mr. Lansbury may be regarded as the spiritual leader of the British Labor movement. By temperament an intensely religious man, Mr. Lansbury is a pacifist in policy and method. His parliamentary experience, and his years of public life as Mayor of the London borough of Poplar, and a member of many governmental committees, have made him a skilled observer of governmental and administrative methods and conditions. Hence it is not surprising that this little book presents a more comprehensive view of Soviet Russia at work than any book that has yet appeared. And this in spite of the fact that a considerable part of the actual facts he presents are more or less known—although they are known, perhaps, only to those few people who have diligently searched for such odds and ends of information as have appeared in publications other than the daily newspapers and popular magazines.

For the general reading public the book will, in effect, be a revelation. There are few people who are not conscious that the newspaper press has failed to present correct data regarding conditions in Soviet Russia. Most newspaper readers say

frankly that they have ceased to read matter about Russia because it is unreliable. Hence the unusual interest and value of this little book.

Mr. Lansbury confines himself to a review of Soviet Russia and the effects upon it of the Allied and American policy. It becomes necessary to review the effects of that policy upon the Allies themselves and the world at large, and this more especially because at this writing the United States has ordered cruisers and destroyers to the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas in connection with the Russo-Polish campaign and a breach of policy between England and France towards that war.

The Russo-Polish War was opened by Poland by a deliberate and unprovoked attack upon Soviet Russia. Polish armies invaded Soviet territory. They were openly supported by France, and, although Premier Lloyd George has declared that the English Government warned the Poles that Britain would not countenance a war of aggression by Poland, there is reason to believe that powerful British influences have given at least unofficial aid to the Poles. The United States aided the Polish adventure by supplying food and munitions of war in great quantities and by an extension of credit to that government. The Italian Government endeavored to adopt a policy similar to that of the English, French and American governments, but was compelled to abandon it in face of the threat of a revolutionary protest by the Italian people. Under this pressure the Italian Government proceeded to the virtual recognition of the Soviet Government.

In the meantime, with an army estimated at 700,000 men, and equipped throughout by the

Allies and America, the Poles penetrated deeply into Russia, cooperating with forces in the Ukraine. At this writing, the Polish Army, after suffering a spectacular defeat, has recovered much of the territory lost to Russia by a successful counter-attack. At Minsk the Polish delegates have apparently been delaying negotiations for peace by all manner of means, after receiving formal announcement of unstinted French support against the Soviet Government, qualified by a suggestion that the Polish forces abstain from another wantonly aggressive attack upon Russia. Another rumor of the early overthrow of the Soviet Government is, however, apparently betraying the French and Polish politicians into a new offensive.

It does not seem to be realized that if the Soviets are overthrown, the alternative in Russia is a condition of civil war and ruinous anarchy, as opposed to some kind of absolute government, which would have to take a military form. In that lies a danger to modern civilization much more immediate than the danger resulting upon a spread of Bolshevist propaganda. A military government in Russia would never rest until it had destroyed not only Poland, but the newly-established Baltic States. The Balkans would again become volcanic, Constantinople again an occasion for war, and thereafter Imperialistic Russia and Japan would again wrestle for domination in the Far East. Long before that last stage, however, the world would have been reduced to hopeless ruin. To overthrow the Soviet may be desirable. But what follows?

During the progress of the Russo-Polish campaign, France persistently refused to have any kind

of communication with Soviet representatives, and has done all in its power to maintain the Polish armies in the field. At the same time, England opened up negotiations with Moscow through accredited representatives of the Soviet Government, the immediate purpose of the negotiations being to establish a basis for the resumption of Anglo-Russian commerce, involving the abandoning of the British blockade, and eventual recognition of the government of Lenin. Repeatedly invited by England to participate in these negotiations, France as often declined.

Following a series of conferences between Premiers Lloyd George and Millerand, during which the policy of England toward Russia was marked by constant vacillation, England resumed full negotiations with Russia, and served notice on the defeated Poles that it would not countenance Poland's war of aggression. This action was countered immediately by the French Government, which announced its continued support of Poland against Russia, and formally recognized the military dictatorship of General Baron Wrangel in the Ukraine as the *de facto* South Russian Government. Simultaneously, the United States Government issued a Note to the Italian Government asking for its views upon the entire situation, but couched in such terms as to warrant France in feeling that it had American support as against the policy of England and Italy. The French interpretation of the American note appears to have been based upon other than superficial conditions, since it has now been supported by the dispatch of American warships into the war zones.

It is clear, therefore, that the Russian question

has caused a breach between France and England, these countries being supported respectively by the United States and Italy. Inasmuch as the British Parliament is in virtual permanent session, having adjourned subject to the call of the Speaker of the House, and King George has postponed leaving London on account of the situation, it is evident that a profound crisis has arisen in Europe, in which the United States has decided to intervene. It therefore becomes necessary to ascertain what has led to the antagonistic policies toward Russia, and thereby secure a fuller understanding of a critical situation which, no matter what the upshot of the present crisis may be, will in all probability prove to be recurrent for the next five or ten years. This opinion is based upon the facts in the case, and its basis is clearly stated by William Hard in "Raymond Robins' Own Story." Robins came back to the United States from Russia "knowing that Lenin's philosophy is indeed a philosophy, and that it cannot be countered by pretending that it is nothing but blood and wind. It challenges Americanism with a genuine challenge. It does not merely reject the basis of Americanism. It brings forward a strongly competitive basis of its own."

"Against idea there must be idea. Against millennial plan there must be millennial plan. Against self-sacrifice to a dream there must be self-sacrifice to a higher and nobler dream."

It is essential that these conclusions of a trained observer of social phenomena be kept in mind and their significance fully realized. The world is unfortunately revolving in a mass of misinformation on the most vital problem of the world today. As

a result there is a vast confusion and a general failure to understand the nature of the crisis that has divided the world's four Great Powers. In effect, the United States finds itself as completely at a loss to understand the present crisis as it was when the World War broke out in August, 1914. There is only one element of difference between the situations: the United States was nearly three years in making up its mind to intervene in the World War: in the Russian problem the United States is already unofficially at war with Russia.

"Intervention," says William Hard in the book already quoted, "has fed the flame of Bolshevism in Russia and has scattered its sparks on a high wind through the world."

In that sentence, true on its face and truer on analysis, lies the key to the inter-Allied crisis. Mr. Hard goes on:

"What has intervention done? What has capitalism, through intervention, done? It has taught Socialism the art of war. It has provided Socialism with a large and a good army. . . ."

This was fact when it was written: it has become a gigantic fact since. Having defeated Kolchak and Denikine, the Soviet armies were converted into Labor Armies by Trotsky, but, upon being attacked again by Poland and the Allies, these armies resumed their war-like aspect and have marched to victory after victory. In effect, a policy of defensive militarism has been forced upon Soviet Russia. Its possible upshot is hinted at by that other observer, Bertrand Russell, who, after a personal visit to Russia, wrote in the New York *Nation:*

"The Russian Government is not imperialistic in

spirit, and would prefer peace to conquest. The country is weary of war and denuded of goods. But if the Western Powers insist upon war, another spirit, which is already beginning to show itself, will become dominant. Conquest will be the only alternative to submission. Asiatic conquest will not be difficult. But for us (the British), from the imperialist standpoint, it will mean utter ruin. And for the continent it will mean revolutions, civil wars, economic cataclysms. The policy of crushing Bolshevism by force was always foolish and criminal; it has now become impossible and fraught with disaster. Our own (English) government, it would seem, has begun to realize the dangers; let us hope it realizes them sufficiently to enforce its view against opposition. If not, the Great War, as we still call it, will have been only the prelude to a conflagration compared to which it will seem to have been a mere frontier skirmish."

The argument can now be continued by Raymond Robins, who, it is scarcely necessary to emphasise, is as strongly anti-Bolshevist as any man in America:

"Bolshevik Russia, left alone, was a loud enough proclaimer of Bolshevism. But Bolshevik Russia, blockaded, starved, attacked by Finns and Poles and Serbs and Czecho-Slovaks and French and Italians and British and Americans and Senegalese, cries Bolshevism now with a doubled voice. It cries it as Bolshevism, as a special philosophy. And it cries it as new, plain, general appeal to every working-class in the world to rally to the rescue of the world's only working-class government, beset by all the world's capitalism.

"It does not cry in vain. In Italy, in France, in Britain, it gets a strong response. And how worded? How worded even in Britain? Worded in threats of strikes which defy the most precious gains of British democratic political development, and which say in effect to Britain's rulers:

" 'Here begins, *if you want it*, the tolling of the passing bell of constitutional government in the land which gave it its birth. Here begins the new government of political dictatorship by industrial force. . . . If you use force against the international working-class in Russia, we will use force against you. We will blockade the whole British bourgeoisie with a strike, and in one month you will do what we tell you to do; because in one month the unorganized and purposeless mass of the electorate would rather take us as rulers and get bread and coal than keep you as rulers and starve and freeze. . . . If you continue the class war of coercion against our class in Russia, we will institute the class war of coercion against your class in Britain.' "

This was written at the end of 1919. In August, 1920, the British labor unions have appointed a Committee of Action to be in permanent session, with full power to order partial or general strikes unless it receives satisfactory guarantees from the British Government that hostilities will be ended against Russia, that the blockade will be lifted, and that the Soviet Government will be recognized by England. A British labor conference has declared the country to be in danger, and, in appointing the Committee of Action, has embarked upon what it specifically recognizes as a drastic and hazardous policy for the future of English rule.

Since conditions very similar to those in England have prevailed in Italy for many months, it begins to be clear why the British Government finds itself unable to continue hostilities toward Russia, and is therefore at variance with the policies of France and the United States. The cost of intervention will be revolution. The British Government therefore declines to take the step which it fears will end in its overthrow and the collapse of the British Empire.

In fact, from the English point of view, the whole world-wide British Empire is threatened and its future is at issue. India and Egypt, for the last six years, have been seething with revolt against British rule. Insurrections have been frequent, and thousands of lives have been lost in them, thousands of people have been jailed, and vast treasure has been expended in maintaining the British hold upon those countries. England emerged from the Great War with Egypt, Persia, Mesopotamia and German East Africa—among other things—to her credit. Already she has virtually lost Persia and is threatened in Mesopotamia. In the event that Soviet Russia sends half a dozen army divisions to Afghanistan, which is a fairly simple operation, England fears that India may flame into uncontrollable revolt and that Egypt will seize the opportunity to declare its independence by similar means.

It is unnecessary to speculate upon the chaos that would engulf the world in such an event. Clearly before us we see revolution in England and Italy; India, Egypt and Ireland in revolt, and Turkey again in leadership of the Mohammedan world against European domination. It would be childish to imagine that France and Germany would be un-

affected by a world in the flames of civil war and universal revolt. And it is equally childish to imagine that the United States could contemplate the spectacle aloof and unburned.

There are other aspects of the matter to be considered. If England went into the World War to free Belgium and for other altruistic aims, as she claimed, now that the war is ended she has to take stock. Huge masses of capital have been sunk in the enterprise, and this capital must be considered in the light of an investment. The loss of so huge an investment spells utter ruin to England. Hence, the investment must be secured, and made to yield a dividend.

This can be done only by the successful exploitation of the territories in Asia Minor and Africa of which England has become possessor by mandate. They must be regarded as the ultimate security for the capital expenditure in the War. From them must come, also, the interest on that investment. England's destiny is therefore bound up with these new conquests.

The peoples in them have become in actual fact subjects of England as completely as are the people of India. Such countries and people are held by another people only by the sword, as England holds India: subject people always chafe at their bonds and are ever ready for revolt. On this account, the Moscow Government has been active in stirring up revolts against England and France in Asia Minor and in India and Egypt,—a policy embarked upon as a defensive act in the East against the Allied aggression in the West. The propaganda has been successful, thereby endangering the Allied War invest-

ments and threatening them not only with revolution, but also with inevitable bankruptcy. It is because England recognizes this danger that she has sought peace with Russia.

Russia need not precipitate actual revolution in Asia Minor against England and France. By keeping the countries in a state of constant social turmoil, the Allied Powers will be compelled to maintain large armies, and to spend vast sums of money in "maintaining order." In itself this will ultimately ruin England and France. While England recognizes the peril she is in and seeks peace with Russia to avert it, France hopes to ruin the Soviet Government, and out of the ruin to secure a government in Russia that will beyond question recognize the debt owing to French investors and continue to pay the interest upon it. Much of this money was lent to Russia through the instrumentality of the French Government before 1914, with the express understanding that it would be used to reorganize and equip the Russian armies in anticipation of the World War which was foreseen.

It becomes necessary to reflect upon the significance of American policy in the premises. Support of England's peace efforts promises security and safety, and peace for the world, in exchange for keeping hands off Russia and allowing Russia to work out its own destiny without foreign interference. Support of France, on the other hand, menaces the existing social system with world-wide ruin from bankruptcy and revolution.

The situation appears to be that England and Italy cannot continue hostilities against Russia because their peoples revolt against it and ruin stares

them in the face. In supporting the French policy, the United States must reckon upon the inability of France to give more than moral and diplomatic aid. That the French people will not tolerate a war against Russia is practically certain. That France could not finance it is much more certain. If, therefore, the United States embarks upon a war against Russia, the country may find itself alone so far as effective support from Europe goes. What the United States has to gain by sending armies to fight the Soviets is a question to reflect upon before America finds itself committed irrevocably to such a policy. The only possible ally in the world for such a venture would be Japan. Such an alliance would involve concessions to Japan in China that American and wide humanitarian interests would find highly undesirable.

In 1920-1921 the United States again appears as the arbiter of world destiny as it did in 1916-1917. Is the world to have war or peace? The answer lies with America, because, without American support, France must make peace with Russia.

It is literally true that the future of the world is at issue in the steps now being taken by France and the United States as opposed to the steps taken by England and Italy. It is a time for thought and the realization that we stand once again, as in 1914, upon the brink of destiny.

Matthew F. Boyd.

New York, August 17, 1920.

# Dedication

WITH FEELINGS OF GREAT RESPECT AND LOVE I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK TO THE MEMORY OF MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHO THROUGHOUT PAST AGES HAVE KEPT ALIVE THE PRINCIPLES OF LOVE AND COMRADESHIP: OF THOSE SAINTS AND MARTYRS, OF ALL THE CHURCHES AND NO CHURCHES, WHO LIVED AND DIED WITHOUT SEEING A GLIMPSE OF THE DAWN OF A NEW DAY, BUT WHO, THROUGH FAITH, REMAINED STEADFAST TO THE END. AND I DEDICATE IT, TOO, TO MY COMRADES OF TO-DAY, ESPECIALLY THE YOUNG, WHO ARE DESTINED TO SEE NOT ONLY THE DAWN BUT THE FULL NOONDAY SUNSHINE OF THE NEW DAY. I WOULD SAY TO THESE LATTER: "BE TRUE TO ONE ANOTHER, BE FAITHFUL IN SMALL AND GREAT THINGS, CULTIVATE LOVE OF THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE GOOD, HATE DARKNESS AND INIQUITY, BUT, IN HATING THINGS, KEEP YOUR MINDS FULL OF LOVE FOR MEN AND WOMEN. REMEMBER ALWAYS THAT GOD AND HUMANITY NEED YOU, AND THAT THE GREATEST, THE CLEVEREST AMONGST YOU, ARE CALLED, BECAUSE OF THEIR TALENTS, TO BE THE FOREMOST IN SERVING AND GIVING TO THE COMMONWEAL."

# PREFACE

LIKE everyone else these days who goes to Russia, I am writing a book. I have no apology to offer for inflicting yet one more story about "Bolshevism" on a long-suffering public. I am sure that, with the exchange of prisoners, and the return to England of hundreds of men and women lately detained in Russia, my book will not be the last.

A word of explanation is due as to how I came to get into Russia, at a time when Labour leaders and others were refused permission or passports to enter that forbidden country. The facts are quite simple. Last January, peace was about to be made between Esthonia and the Russian Soviet Republic. The "Daily Herald" numbers amongst its friends members of all the delegations in London representing the border States of Russia. We had specially championed the cause of Esthonia in the pages of the weekly "Herald." I thought it would be a good

thing to go through Scandinavia to Dorpat, see the peace signed, and, if possible, enter Russia with the returning Russian delegates. Nothing was certain; I had no sort of understanding with anybody as to whether I should be allowed to enter Russia or not. I asked for a passport to Scandinavia and Finland and secured the necessary "visés" before leaving England—except the Finnish, which, I was informed, could not be given for two weeks. I did not ask for a passport to Russia for the quite simple reason that neither the British nor any other Government had any power to issue such passports, since no Government in Europe at that time had officially recognised the Soviet Government. There was no mystery about my journey. I travelled like any other newspaper man, saw everybody of importance in each country through which I passed, and tried to learn all there was to learn about conditions. My intention was to be away from England three weeks or a month. I was away nine weeks, every day of which brought me knowledge, understanding and experience. I want to put on record my deep debt of gratitude to the Ministers and other Government officials, both British and foreign, with whom I came in contact.

During the whole nine weeks, except for the short controversy in Copenhagen over Litvinoff's hotel, and for the unfortunate escapade which ended in my arrest and imprisonment in a detention camp, called a "Quarantine Station," in Finland, my relationships with everyone were most cordial. I was treated as an honoured guest by Socialists and non-Socialists; I received the confidences of Ministers, and of one Prime Minister. The Customs Houses, Passport Offices, and Secret Police, were a very great trial and inconvenience, but they were all safely negotiated—although at times it seemed as if the very devil himself were engaged in spoking my wheels.

I learned one thing which is indelibly fixed on my mind. It is this: all Governments from the greatest to the least are ruled by fear. It is fear which has created the British Secret Police under Sir Basil Thomson, and it is fear which has linked this department up with the Secret Police of other countries. So powerful, so widespread, is the net which Sir Basil Thomson and his secret agents are weaving, that even the domain of ordinary diplomacy is not free of them. When James O'Grady went to Denmark to negotiate the

exchange of prisoners, the most important member of his staff was one of the chief assistants to Sir Basil Thomson—who, I suppose, knows more about the activities of us all than we know ourselves. It is mere literal truth to say that the negotiations between O'Grady and Litvinoff became cordial and possible only after this gentleman's return to England.

I think it well that the British people should understand we are now partially ruled by an irresponsible Secret Police. While the working classes are arguing about the sort of International they wish to establish, the Capitalist Governments have created a new "International" made up of spies and Agents Provocateurs, and this in order to preserve for the privileged few in all countries the right to exploit their fellow men and women. The Workers' International should make one of the first objects of its propaganda the entire sweeping away, root and branch, of this system of international mischief-making and spying. Unless we do so, there will be no sanctuary in the world for revolutionists or even reformers.

Had the present iniquitous system and laws been in force fifty years ago, Mazzini, Marx,

Kropotkin, and thousands of others would have found no refuge in England or elsewhere. The "sacred right of property" for the time being has swept away the "sacred right of asylum" for political offenders. In defence of this International Bureaucracy it is argued that the need for it exists because of the propaganda carried on by secret Societies and Revolutionaries. It is a strange commentary on this argument that many Governments carry on a persistent secret propaganda, paid for out of secret service funds which are never checked or audited, thus enabling police officials to have at their disposal huge sums of money with which to create and stir up the violence they are employed to track down.

It is also possible to use such funds and secret power for blackmail and private revenge, and in some countries this is actually done. The one and only safeguard for democracy is perfect freedom of speech and organisation, and a free press.

Yes, fear is what we all have to fear, for this it is which makes individuals and governments cruel beyond words. We hear a great deal about Russian atrocities in prison. In at least one of the Baltic States, I know for

a fact, torture is still applied to prisoners, and I also know that in Great Britain political prisoners are treated in the usual inhuman manner in which all common prisoners are treated: that is, garbed in a hideous uniform stamped with the broad arrow, kept in solitary confinement, forcibly fed if they hunger-strike, and in every way made to feel how sordidly mean and miserable their position is. I call attention to these facts here, because they apply to every country, and my one solid conviction gained in conversation with all sorts of people is that Socialist and Labour Governments must be prepared at all hazards to throw over all such methods, once they come into power.

In my story I do not propose to be an apologist. I do not consider Lenin or his comrades need me or any one else to act as such. In my judgment, no set of men and women responsible for a revolution of the magnitude of the Russian Revolution ever made fewer mistakes or carried their revolution through with less interference with the rights of individuals, or with less terrorism and destruction, than the men in control in Russia. When I speak of the rights of individuals I exclude property rights, for the one object

of the revolution was to abolish for good and all the "right" of one set of individuals to exploit the life and work of their fellow men and women. Further, it is no part of my business as a Socialist to search out and strive to discover material for criticism or denunciation: I did not go to Russia as a cold-blooded investigator seeking to discover what there was of evil; I went as a Socialist, to see what a socialist revolution looks like at close quarters; and, above everything else, to look at the faces of those who made the revolution. It was the spirit moving the men and women responsible for the revolution I wanted to discover, for all else is of no importance.

The Russian people have a long and difficult path to tread before they reach their goal: there will be much more agony and bloody sweat. I am confident, however, that from this young, mighty people new life will come. In the meantime we who live in lands where the people are much older and more experienced in the methods and ways of the devil, and where enthusiasm is frowned upon, must look to it that we put no obstacles in the way of this young people; instead, we too should cast away the works of darkness and join them in their march toward the dawn.

People like me, who for long years have served in the ranks of Labour and Socialism, and for whom there cannot be a very long span of years ahead, must give love, sympathy and help to the virile and young everywhere.

In England we have the forms of democracy, but oh, so little of the spirit of democracy! In Russia, out of the autocracy and oppression of Czardom real equality, real democracy are being born. The form is not always there, but the spirit is. Where else in the world will you find the equality of suffering there is in Russia; where else would you find all equally sharing the hunger, privation, and disease caused by the Allies' blockade? Where else in all the world will you find a Government treating enemy aliens as Soviet Russia treated them during the years of war and struggle on every front? And where would you find so few enemy aliens interned and imprisoned. And, sad to say, as a requital they have been lied about and slandered, as if in very deed they had been the greatest tyrants under the sun.

I see the Socialists of Russia as a band of men and women striving to build the New Jerusalem; they declare that for their task they need no help from on High, no power

but the power which economic forces bring them. I disagree, and believe that, in spite of their theories, in defiance of their creed, they are actuated by purely moral and religious motives; that they of all men, in their work for Russia, are doing what Christians call the Lord's work. My own faith and belief in "pacifism" is unshaken. I still think that salvation comes not from without, but from within. Yet when I look at England, I am not sure that if I had the power I should at once abolish the police. And, when I know that the overwhelming mass of my Christian friends defend bloodshed, violence, and horrors, wherever these are ordered by Governments; when I realise that the high dignitaries of the Church in the House of Lords are like dumb driven cattle when men like Connolly and Pearce are shot in Dublin, or when Dyer in the sacred name of order slaughters unarmed Indians in the streets of Amritsar; and, finally, when I see and hear no protest from Christendom against the wicked vicious treaty which has brought suffering and death to millions of our fellow creatures, and will bring further terror and misery to millions yet unborn—when I think of these things, I am constrained to ask, who

is there amongst the Churches and Governments of Europe and America that dare cast the first stone at the Soviet Government of Russia?

Above and over everything else we need to understand that personal success is of no account. The one and only thing that matters is we should be true to the highest that is in us.

Through long weary ages men and women have struggled toward the golden age. Again and again they have found themselves disappointed, cast down, because the higher they reached, the more severe their struggles, the farther off appeared their goal. In Russia, indeed throughout the world, this struggle for the highest has assumed a new guise. We are understanding that from within comes salvation, and at the same time we understand what appears to be a paradox, that in modern life we cannot be socially saved alone. We understand clearer than ever the meaning of the cry, "Am I my brother's keeper?" for we know "our brother is our keeper." Look where we will, go where we may, the old theories of life have proved themselves valueless, and to-day the hope of the world is the cry of the ages—"Liberty, Equality,

Fraternity." Liberty is life, Equality is the realisation that life for all is of value, Fraternity is Love and Comradeship.

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# WHAT I SAW IN RUSSIA

## CHAPTER I

### FINLAND TO MOSCOW

CROSSING by water from England to France or from England to Ireland is the kind of material fact that of itself makes one conscious of going from one country to another, but travelling from England to Scotland there is no such fact to remind us we are leaving the South for the more sombre North. I remember once travelling from London to Edinburgh in company with those sturdy Scots, J. R. Macdonald and George Barnes. With the usual modesty of people from the hard-headed North, they had both occupied some time in what I am afraid was a hopeless endeavour to give me some knowledge of political science as understood by them. On crossing the Tweed at Berwick George Barnes suddenly called out: "Throw open the windows, Lansbury, and let in the pure free air of Scotland."

Of course, I did so, but strange as it may

sound to a Scotsman I could not discover any difference between the air one side of the river and the other: neither could I see any difference in the look of the people—they walked about as aimlessly as elsewhere. Of course they speak a sort of language a little difficult for a Londoner to understand, and occasionally wear skirts and kilts—the utility of which is past the comprehension of a mere southerner. I was reminded of these incidents when standing on the Finnish side of the little river, the middle of which forms the imaginary border line between Russia and Finland. The men and women on both sides looked exactly alike: most of them spoke the same language. And yet each side of the river is an armed camp. People on the Finnish side are armed to defend a capitalist republic, on the Russian side to defend a social revolution. Only on one side, and that the Russian, did the fighters understand that frontiers are not real dividing lines these days—that only systems really divide, all else being makebelieve.

Before the revolution the train service from Helsingfors to Petrograd and Moscow and then on across Russia was the most efficient in that part of the world. To-day, with neither coal nor oil available, and with wood only for use on the locomotives, the service is anything but efficient. In addition, the railway bridge across the river is broken down

and forms a kind of dam: it lies athwart the stream, a witness to the destruction and folly of war.

The journey from Helsingfors began on Tuesday, February 3rd, and ended on Thursday, February 5th, at 5 o'clock, when we crossed the river. The time had been spent in 18 hours travelling by train and, for the remainder, in rushing from one police and military headquarters to another, and finally to the secret police, getting the necessary *visés* to enable us to pass over. We were a queer little company gathered on the Finnish side of the river; chief amongst us was an English officer, cursing his own and everybody else's luck because the "Reds" on the other side, unaware of the value of a British officer's dignity and time, had kept him waiting over four hours. Next in importance I suppose was the chief of the Finnish Secret Police. I am not sure as to his feelings towards me: I still think if he had dared he would have stopped our going across. There was also a goodly sprinkling of military people, chief of whom was a very agreeable young captain who could speak English. He was kindness itself to us, and when Griffin Barry and I were in despair about getting our luggage from the station to the river, he volunteered the assistance of his men and did everything in his power to make us under-

stand that he was our friend and desirous of helping us.

At last we saw a band of men and women coming down the bank of the river from the other side. We walked down to meet them and, as is the custom on such occasions, everybody stopped at an imaginary point in the centre of the river, and for the first time I was able to see "Red" soldiers face to face. Whatever else may be said of these men who are holding the fort for Russia on this front, it is an undeniable fact that for honesty of expression, modesty, dignity and pride in their own manhood, they cannot be beaten. From their uniforms no one could tell who was an officer or who was a private. The Commander-in-Chief wore no decorations and no epaulettes or feathers. The Commissar, who is also a Colonel, carried himself with a natural dignity which somehow made us all understand he was a leader amongst men. After a few minutes' parley we all climbed to the Finnish side again, in order to exchange papers. The English officer enquired for the "Red" officer's credentials. The only credential he could produce was his card of membership of the Communist Party. Then our turn came. I produced a letter of recommendation from Litvinoff, and Barry produced a passport he had received a few weeks before, but neither was of much use, as no

one in authority on this frontier had received instructions as to our coming. We were told, however, that we could go across and enquiries would be made as to our future movements.

At 4.50 we marched down again, and in a few minutes I was almost shouting for joy that at last I was in Russia. If I had been less self-conscious I should have sung The Red Flag, for just a few hundred yards ahead I saw the flag of "International Socialism" flying over a Government building, which turned out to be the residential headquarters of the Commissar Commandant of the district. This man and his wife live here in the very simplest manner possible. They have no children, so she accompanies her husband to the war zone and shares his dangers. Other women similarly situated are doing likewise.

Comrade Kokko, for that is his name, was formerly manager of a big works in Helsingfors. When the revolution broke out, like everyone else he was obliged to choose on which side he would take his stand: he joined the "Reds." When Mannerheim and the Germans smashed the revolution, he and thousands of other Finns fled to Russia, and are now enrolled as a Finnish "Red" army, assisting to protect Russia against the attacks of the "White" Finns.

After a short sledge ride, we arrived at the house, and soon discovered we were an "international" party. Between us there were four different languages: Russian, French, English, and Finnish. Somehow we made ourselves understood to each other, and very soon were all talking together. Words fail me to describe the sense of peaceful security which came over me while here. Before getting to Raiyoki I had been feeling sick and ill. The worry and strain had told on both Barry and me. The continued coming up against one difficulty after another had given me a very violent headache, which just vanished once I was amongst friends. Over and over again I found myself wishing Athelstan Riley and Lord Northcliffe could have been present, and seen how heartily I was enjoying myself with these men and women they so ignorantly denounce as brigands and murderers. The words "shaking hands with murder" came again and again to my mind, and what puzzled me most of all was the fact that I could neither see nor hear of any trace of the love of bloodshed and slaughter. As I listened, I could discover no trace of the hatred and bitterness I have listened to in railway carriages in England during the war. It seemed to me, though, that the mass of people are all alike. It is only the few who are hateful and brutal. People everywhere are much alike: in fact,

as we stood in the middle of the frozen river, the thought came to my mind that if we were all stripped, and only one language were spoken, it would be very difficult to find in what essential things we differ from one another.

We all eat and drink, love and hate, work and sleep. What is it divides us into "Reds" and "Whites"? Only the downright crass stupidity which makes people imagine that a customs-house is something sent by God, and that frontiers are an invention of nature to keep people apart.

I felt no more shame shaking hands and taking food with the officers and men of the "Red" army than I did thirteen months earlier taking food with British officers in Cologne. I was as proud of one as the other: that is, I felt no pride at all, I simply felt a great pleasure on both occasions. Yet I was in company with people whose business it was to kill, both in Germany and Russia.

Humanity, however, is always better than it appears. The average soldier and officer no more likes killing than any of the rest of us; neither do revolutionists. It is the training of centuries which is our undoing. We have all been taught to rely on brute force. Some day we shall discover that the true dynamic of life is knowledge and understanding.

Here in Russia conditions were different from what they were at the British headquarters in Cologne. Our new-found friends wished to feed us, but, although they were officers and privates combined, there was nothing for us to have except bread and tea. Usually on this front, I believe, it is possible to get extra food from Finland. We had struck an unlucky patch, for everything was used up; so we undid our bags, unloaded our stock of ham, butter and cheese, and some fourteen of us sat down to what was for our friends a very sumptuous repast. After this some officers arrived from Petrograd, chief of whom was the chief officer of the whole Petrograd district, Comrade Rachi. He heard all we had to tell him about ourselves and agreed to take us to the Finnish headquarters at Petrograd until he could get word from Moscow what to do with us.

We had three hours to wait for a train, so entered into a discussion about the revolution, terrorism and violence generally. None of them accepted my view about violence; all understood the Tolstoyan position, but were confident it could not be applied. Not one would agree that there had been outrage and murder for murder's sake. All agreed that here and there private vengeance had been taken and outrages committed, and all had

stories to tell of "White" murders and terrorism, especially under Mannerheim.

It is worth remarking that most of these Finnish "Reds" believe that had the "Red" Government established in Finland been more violent in its methods it would not have been overthrown. They tell with indignation the story of Mannerheim's slaughter of 30,000; and they asked me why those Christians who denounce "Red" "atrocities" do not equally denounce these "White" massacres. One of the chief officers at supper with us was formerly an officer in the Czar's army. This gave me the chance to enquire whether there was any danger that these officers might turn round and plot against the revolution. The answer was very simple, and very emphatic. The "Red" army is ruled not from above but from below: officers have only to obey orders—when they refuse they are removed. Policy is dictated by the workers, only tactics and execution of orders is left to officers.

I asked this ex-Czarist General why he had become a communist. He replied it was a process of conversion. The Revolution came. No one in the army, especially among the officers, knew very much about its aims and objects; now they were understanding better. As for himself, he was a convinced communist, and was very proud to be an officer in Trotsky's army.

So far as I could judge, the relationships between officers and men were extremely cordial. There is no "kow-towing" as in our army; no clicking of heels and saluting for the special benefit of officers. (Heels are clicked to everybody: this foolish system obtains all through Scandinavia). We all sat at the same table for our food and throughout there was a true spirit of comradeship amongst us. The behaviour of all towards the women was very good indeed. Mrs. Kokko was treated with respect and regard, as if she were the mother of the regiment.

Somewhere about 10 o'clock we made a move towards Bielo Ostrov station. We travelled by an ordinary train packed full of people. There was no room for our party in the carriages, so we travelled with the guard. I was allowed to sit on the seat usually occupied by that official. We were a mixed lot: railway workers of all grades, generals, brigadier-generals, colonels, commissars, and some privates. Here was a chance of seeing the relationships between civilians and soldiers. They were most cordial; discussion on all sorts of topics took place, and sometimes the arguments used were very warm, especially on the question of what part trade unions are to play in the new industrial life of Russia.

We arrived at Petrograd about 11.45 p.m. It was a glorious moonlight night, bitterly

cold. The roads and streets were covered with hard frozen snow. As we left the station it was possible to look at our fellow travellers. All of them appeared in good health, and none of them seemed to be suffering from the intense cold.

Here, as elsewhere in Russia, freedom of movement is circumscribed by the authorities. For all this, many thousands of people are travelling every day.

Our friend Rachi had arranged for a motor to meet us. I understand there are about forty cars in Moscow and forty in Petrograd, all used by the Government for one purpose or another. We had a delightful half-hour's drive through the city. No one but those who have experienced it can realise what it means to drive into a foreign city for the first time. There is everywhere so much to be seen. Russian cities, even Petrograd, most modern of all European Russian towns, give one a sense of strangeness and bigness. Always in Russia the sky appears unending, and this night I saw sights which are indelibly stamped on my memory. Only once before have I felt quite the same. About thirty-five years ago I saw a very different scene when sailing up the river to Brisbane in Australia: then the glorious foliage and scenery, with little white shanties dotted here and there, made the whole 500 emigrants, of whom I was one,

imagine we were indeed entering the promised land. And now I was seeing other sights, which will stand out for ever in my memory —riding through Petrograd under brilliant moonlight; catching sight of first one great tower and then another; tearing along the river embankment to see, as in a flash, the long, narrow, sinister-looking, gilded tower of the hideous fortress of Peter and Paul; seeing, a second or two later, as in a moving picture, the Minaret and towers of the Mosque erected to the service of Mahomet. We passed the Admiralty buildings, the Hermitage picture gallery, the British Embassy, hearing as we passed the story of how our countryman, Captain Crombie, met his death. We crossed the square in front of the Winter Palace, and at last found ourselves at the headquarters of the "Red" Finns, and were very hospitably welcomed by Mrs. Rachi and her family.

It was very difficult to talk, because I knew no language but my own. Barry speaks French, it is true, but no one understood that much better than English. Yet what does language matter? When people are tired and hungry they are able to make their wants known without words, so we were fed, shown to our rooms, and were very soon in darkness. There was little or no sleep for me: the day's experiences would keep flood-

ing my mind. I wished, how I wished, I could have turned all England out to share my experience, and so let them see Russian Bolsheviks as they really are, not as they are painted in the capitalist press as brutal murderers and terrorist villains!

We all got up pretty early, but our day was rather wasted. Most of the Soviet officials were away in Moscow attending a Congress. It was consequently difficult to find our interpreter. Barry, who knows Petrograd thoroughly, went out and made a brave endeavour to find someone who could talk with us, but it was no use; we just walked about where we could, looked at people, and marvelled at how well they seemed to be—and, what is more, at how much activity there was in evidence.

Most shops were closed. This gave us a shock, as it would anybody, yet people appeared to have plenty to do. The trams were running and were crowded, but we could not talk and so went back home. Rachi was able to tell us at 4 o'clock that I could speak to Tchitcherin in Moscow at 8 o'clock, and so we waited in patience till that hour came round, and, after a few minutes' talk on the telephone, it was decided that we should go right on to Moscow.

We left our friend Rachi and his family with many thanks. They had been more than

kind and hospitable. They treated us as comrades and friends, sharing their food and accommodation, and trying in every way to make us comfortable. On the following morning we had to decide how to find an interpreter to accompany us to Moscow—it is at least a twenty-two hour journey. After some discussion we thought of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, the well known anarchists, who had been deported to Russia by the American Government. We decided to ask one or both of them to make the journey with us. Alec Berkman agreed to do so, and at mid-day we went off to the station. It has been said by some friendly and unfriendly critics that mine was an official "personally conducted" tour, under very pleasant and comfortable conditions. Well, all I can say is that I am not able to remember either comfort or pleasure in connection with railway travelling in Russia; and this, my first long journey, was made pleasurable only by the fact that Comrade Berkman accompanied us, and that Emma Goldman and he supplied us with some food they had brought from America.

We had no pot or pan, cup, saucer or plate, no knives or spoons; we managed to borrow a not quite clean kettle in which to get boiling water and in which we made tea. We borrowed a small tin mug, much the worse for

wear, out of which to drink, all three of us treating it as a sort of loving cup. We cut up our food with my penknife. We occupied a compartment made for two, so as I was biggest and oldest I occupied the top berth and Barry and Berkman the bottom, and thus we travelled in great luxury and comfort!

The journey was for me a succession of experiences. First of all there were the people on the train: workmen, peasants, soldiers. Berkman was able to talk with many of them, as he is a Russian. We heard numerous grumblings and complaints, but no word of support for counter-revolution. At the stations (and we stopped at every one throughout the whole journey from Petrograd to Moscow) we were able to see peasant men and women, boys and girls. It is strange how, in every provincial district of every country, people flock to the railway stations to see the trains arrive and depart. Russia is no exception to the rule.

As a portion of our journey was on Sunday morning, we were able now and then to catch the sound of church bells, not like ours in the English villages, but rather like fire alarms in their clanging sort of monotone. Again and again I found myself saying to my companions: "Well, anyhow, these people are very very far from actual starvation." Away

from the towns I believe people are able to live in much more comfort than in the towns. Wood is easier to obtain. One little incident reminded me of tales of my youth. At one station I saw a man and woman washing with snow. Not to be outdone I rushed out of the train and did the same, much to the amusement of my fellow passengers.

We arrived at Moscow at mid-day on Sunday. There was no one to meet us. As we had no idea where to go, we decided to camp at the station, and for over two hours we were able to watch the people, to look around and see the churches, and also to take a look at the railway station opposite the one we came in at. The first thing that struck us was the great crowd of men, women and boys, shouting and wrangling for the job of carrying our luggage on small hand sledges. Here, if anywhere, there should have been signs of dejection, yet it would be quite wrong to write of this as a crowd of physical or mental wrecks. It is always a mystery to me how such people live in London and other great towns. Here in Moscow it seemed a much greater mystery. I looked for signs of revolution, of battle and murder, but saw none —except that at the station opposite some hundreds of "Red" army soldiers were camped, waiting transportation to one or other of the fighting fronts. Here we saw

the first gruesome sight, which made both Barry and myself ashamed of our nationality. Scores of wounded soldiers lay about in different parts of the station-building, waiting their turn to be moved into hospitals already dreadfully overcrowded. One man, with terrible wounds, said he had been waiting for weeks for new bandages and treatment. The British Government by its damnable blockade has prevented even the medical necessaries being sent in: our own soldier prisoners have suffered because of this barbarous conduct, and tens of thousands of Russian soldiers have died in agony because no doctor had the means of alleviating their suffering and misery. As I looked at these poor suffering men, I wondered what sort of row the Jingo press would have set up had the Germans committed such a dastardly act as this, and I also wondered what had become of the international Red Cross. I think, before any of us give another penny to such organisations, we should first of all require an undertaking that the Red Cross societies will put all their resources at the service of *all* who need them, whether in time of civil or of racial wars.

We were able to inspect some very fine drawings and pictures painted on the interior walls of the stations, though here, as everywhere, it was inspection of people that interested me most. I had been warned before

entering Russia to beware of crowds; to look out for lice, bugs and fleas; to remember that in railway carriages disease was always to be found. I had travelled twenty-two hours with a carriageful of people, and for two hours had gone in and out amongst lots more. I had seen no diseased person. The only sick I came across were wounded soldiers, and, as for the above-mentioned insect scavengers, I never saw one the whole twenty-five days I was in Russia. It will be no use for expert people to say trains were specially prepared for me: they were not, except on the one occasion when a third class compartment was set aside to allow a party of us to visit Kropotkin (an occasion about which I shall speak elsewhere). I went about in an ordinary manner, and can only testify as to what happened to me.

Our waiting time ended about 3.30, when Comrade Rosenberg, one of the chief officials at the Foreign Office, came with a motor and took Barry and me to our future home. As in Petrograd, the drive was just like a moving picture. The roads, however, were very bad indeed. During the whole of my stay in Moscow I could not overcome the feeling of nervous dread every time I entered a motor. The drivers were all "Red" army men, quite fearless, and they drove always as if for dear life, risking their own and their passengers'

lives and the lives of all pedestrians within fifty yards of their cars.

For all this, the glory of Moscow's wonderful buildings and towers glittering in the golden sunlight could not be lost on me. When we reached the entrance to the Kremlin, it seemed for a moment like another world —but only for a moment. The men and women at the famous shrine soon appeared like the rest. Yet somehow, as we went under the arch and saw on one side the famous entrance to a kind of inner city of palaces, and were reminded that for centuries before the revolution no one had gone under the archway entrance without taking off his headgear, it did seem as if we had entered into a world centuries old. This also passed away, for we were informed that now almost everyone goes through with covered head. After all, this archway is only the shell of religion, not religion itself, which always must be a matter of life and action. A little farther on is the stand on which, in the brutal days of the Czars, men and women were publicly flogged and scourged with the knout by the brutal hirelings of the autocracy.

We also passed the famous church or shrine erected by Boris Goudonov, and on down a rather narrow business street to the Moskva river. Crossing to the south side, we drove along the embankment to a mansion formerly

inhabited by a rich merchant. During the early days of the war this house was occupied by the French military mission: since the revolution it has been used as a Soviet guest house. Many newspaper men have been lodged here. It is a finely built house and very nicely planned with all modern conveniences, but hideously decorated. The furniture is what it usually is in rich merchants' houses everywhere; but, as I am not an artist, I found my room very comfortable indeed. There were other newspaper men living here: we were all waited on by an old retainer of the family (the family was in exile). He did everything possible to make our food agreeable. It was rather pathetic to find this old servant worrying himself because he could not feed us as he had been accustomed to feed his master's guests in days long ago.

I may as well state here what our meals consisted of. At 9.30 we had breakfast—three slices of black bread, a little butter or substitute, a little cheese, and two glasses of tea with no milk; at 5.30 or earlier, our chief meal—soup, generally two platefuls each (this was usually made with vegetables, though sometimes it was made from water that fish had been boiled in, and occasionally some meat would appear to have had a look in), cusha (I think this is the correct word: it is a kind of rice or birdseed, boiled with fish

and occasionally with meat), bread, and two glasses of tea. At bedtime, usually about 11 or 12.30, sometimes later, we had supper—cusha boiled in fat, bread, jam and sometimes cheese and tea. On several occasions we had potatoes. After George Copping came to live with us we helped him eat up some bacon he had brought from Esthonia, and also some eggs, which I very much fear cost him a small fortune.

Because I was old and also because I was a little ill, I was given heat for my room: otherwise the house was always very cold, and I think all of us were ready for extra food, although I honestly believe we fared better than members of the Government. In any case I am sure we fared better than our friend Rosenberg, with whom on one occasion I had a meal.

Rosenberg fixed our appointments and interviews, and in a thousand ways was very helpful; and I am glad to record my very grateful thanks for his assistance from start to finish of my visit.

## CHAPTER II

### LENIN AND OTHER LEADERS

DURING my not short life I have met distinguished people in all parts of the world. In our own country the late King Edward took part in a meeting of a Royal Commission before which I was a witness. At the close of my evidence, together with a number of other people, I talked and lunched with him. I have also interviewed President Wilson, Colonel House, and most of the leading statesmen who have been in and out of office in this country during the past dozen years; I have met Church dignitaries, trade union officials, men and women connected with both large and small businesses, and amongst them all I class none on the same footing of far-reaching ability, downright straightforwardness and whole-hearted enthusiasm and devotion to the cause of humanity with Nicolai Lenin or Vladimir Ulianov—which is his real name.

Lenin celebrated his fiftieth birthday this

year, on the 10th April—the 28rd by our calendar. He was born in Simbirsk in the Volga region. His father was by origin a peasant. His mother came of the same stock. Consequently Lenin is a pure born Russian. His family were always on the side of the revolution, his brother Alexander being executed in 1887 by order of Alexander II. Lenin attended the university of Kazan, but was expelled for taking part in a students' demonstration. In spite of this he took his degree.

In 1890 he was exiled to Siberia and then went to Geneva, where he spent a great deal of time in the libraries studying Marx and the literature of the revolution.

It is often stated that his wife and he live apart. This is one of those falsehoods which it has suited the enemies of socialism to perpetrate against one of the most high-souled men that ever led a popular movement. Nadiezda Krupskaya-Ulianova, wife of Lenin, has always been his most active helper both in the secret and public organisation of Russian socialism and she is still his most ardent helper and friend.

During the war he was active at Zimmerwald and at the Kienthal Conferences. He has always opposed pure pacifism and has taken the stand that the socialists' reply to war was revolution. I met him on the day of my 61st birthday. I found him in a quite

plain room in one of the big palaces of the Kremlin: no flunkies announced my arrival, and although soldiers guarded the outer entrances to the palace, his rooms were quite unguarded. There were groups of women clerks working away on typewriting machines, but an absolute lack of ostentation of any sort or kind pervaded the building. I contrasted the sort of study in which I found him with that used by cabinet ministers in this or any other country. Here I was face to face with the man who was centre of the greatest revolution in the history of the world, foremost leader in the re-organisation and rebuilding of the life of a nation comprising over 100 million human beings, beset on all sides by open enemies and false friends, attempting to build up life for a nation as the children of Israel centuries ago attempted to make bricks without straw. It was hard to realise that this was the man who was carrying on his shoulders the tremendous burden which a starving, disease stricken nation imposed.

When I saw him he had just recovered from a serious illness, and yet he was cheerful and apparently vigorous; not for one moment did conversation on his side flag, nor for an instant did he hesitate to answer the most direct, clear-cut questions in a straightforward, honest manner. Cabinet Ministers in other countries would have talked of their troubles, of their

difficulties, would have surrounded themselves with a group of officials to prevent the possibility of any mistake in their answering of questions: but Lenin takes the field alone, and this because he is not a diplomat—that is, he does not use language of a double meaning but wants you to understand what he means. He hates compromise. He will not accept the pacifist view of life because he believes that the possessing classes will inevitably compel the workers to fight. He emphasised this again and again: "You and the workers may not want to fight but the capitalist class will make you fight: they will never concede to reason what they will be obliged to concede to force." As I watched him I wondered what was the source of his strength, because there was strength written all over him, mental and moral strength came with every word he spoke. He was anxious that I should not call him an agnostic but an atheist; that I should be quite certain of what his view was of religion. He defended the position by calling attention to the chloroforming influence which organised religion had exercised over the lives of the masses of the workers, not only in Russia but everywhere else.

I believe his strength comes because he is absolutely impersonal. He is the best hated and the best loved man in the world, but I believe he is absolutely indifferent both to love

and hatred.—I do not mean that he has no feeling, because I am confident that he loves little children, but in the pursuit of the cause of socialism he cannot be thwarted or turned one side or the other by personal considerations of any kind. He would go to the scaffold as calmly as to a meeting of his cabinet. He is not the "boss" of Russia, but he is the inspiring spirit of Russia. If there is such a thing embodied in humanity as the spirit of religion, then Lenin has got it to a larger extent than any other man I have met.

Sadoul likens him to "St. Ignatius Loyola," founder of the "Society of Jesus," because he has founded the communist order within which men and women must vow to serve only the commonweal, must have no personal ambitions, must live only for the nation—and Lenin himself does this and thus becomes their leader. He is a doer of the word, not a mere talker. While talking with him it was impossible to imagine that such a man would love or care for violence or butchery, torture or any of the other horrors which are laid to his charge. He is too big in his outlook and much too wide in his sympathies to want to kill anyone. The thing, however, that causes his great determination is the fact that he has travelled, not merely in Russia but throughout the world, and understands theoretically and practically what a cursed thing capitalism can

be; he has suffered with the workers, and to suffer together is the cement of human friendship—he understands these things. Like the saints of old, he has devoted his whole life to the destruction of capitalism, which he believes is the most awful cancer in the life of humanity. Those who would be his friends must be as pure hearted as he: he has no room for any of us who are half and half, he wants us to be one thing or the other. He does not understand patriotic socialism. He does understand the pacifist attitude although he does not agree with it, but he will have nothing to do with those socialists who cry out for the defence of the fatherland, because the fatherland to him is the world. He typifies in my judgment, a living expression of the saying of Tom Paine: "The world is my country, to do good is my religion, all mankind are my brethren." Thus he will take no part and expects other Socialists to take no part in the wars waged by capitalism. It is his enthusiasm and his words which have made soldiers in the Red army realise that in fighting, they are fighting not for Russia but for all humanity.

I repeat it is strange to me to think of him as having no religion, because his whole life seems to be that of one of the saints of old. Whatever may happen to him in the days to come he will be enshrined in the heart of all

Socialists worthy of the name throughout the length and breath of the world; and this for his own sake, and also because of the tremendous service he has rendered to the common people. It is extraordinary to find that most of his bitter enemies in the Church, and amongst the classes whom his policy has ruined so far as material wealth goes, speak well of this Russian. It is only outside Russia that filth is thrown at him and lying calumnies printed about him. For Lenin has proved himself a great impersonal soldier and leader in the one cause worth living, and if needs be, dying for—the establishment of the International by the replacement of capitalism by socialism.

Before the revolution the Czars were known as the "little fathers of the Russian people." To-day Lenin is symbolic of a new spirit. He is in very deed a father of his people—a father who toils for them, thinks for them, acts for them, suffers with them, and is ready to stand in danger or in safety struggling on their behalf. Tens of thousands of men and women love him and would die for him because he is their comrade, their champion in the cause of social and economic freedom.

A few days later I travelled sixty versts out of Moscow to meet Peter Kropotkin and his wife. They are old friends and I found them in a comfortable house in a rather nice little

village, looking to me very picturesque with its quaint wooden houses covered with snow and ice. The house they live in is one which has become vacant because the previous owner has left the country. As everywhere the people in this village were hungry, but not so hungry as the people in Moscow. Kropotkin, his wife and daughter have suffered as much as most people owing to the shortage of food: I think also they miss the company of friends, and from their conversation I gathered that they found themselves rather apart from things that are going on.

Kropotkin and Madame Kropotkin are both very scornful and condemnatory of the Soviet Government and all its methods. They think of it as a class government and as tyranny. I believe they take no part in the organisation of life at all. Listening to them, it seemed to me a tragedy that after all the years of toil and stress, this brave, confident fighter on behalf of truth should find himself, in the midst of the revolution which he had done so much to help bring about, a comparative stranger, or at least unable to take part in its organising work. I am doubtful though if any elected government would have really satisfied our comrade. He is a philosophical anarchist and hates authority. He seems quite confident that the Russian nation will win its salvation, if only the outside world will leave

it alone. He has no patience with the policy of intervention; in fact, he declares it is intervention which has brought his country to the plight in which it now is.

One morning, almost before I was up, I had a visit from Vladimir Chertkoff and his son. People who are interested in the work of the Society of Friends of Russian Freedom will remember the long years that Chertkoff lived in this country at Tuckton House near Christchurch. He is a Tolstoyan and I found talking to him, or rather listening to him talking, with his son joining in occasionally, one of the most interesting of the interviews that took place between myself and Russians.

They are typical Tolstoyans in that they believe no evil and try to think good of all men. They are distressed because of the horrors and violence which has accompanied the revolution. They would have preferred that the co-operative movement had remained a voluntary organisation apart from the Government. They think there is too much discipline, too much organisation, but both are absolutely loyal to the Government. They recognise the difficulties which beset Lenin and his colleagues; they understand, too, the terrible difficulties which the revolution has created; both believe that the present Government and all its machinery of compulsion is only a passing stage.

I asked Chertkoff himself what he would do if he now had power. I also put the same question to Kropotkin. Kropotkin answered that possibly nothing else could be done but was being done: he did not seem quite sure. But Chertkoff, who is really a disciple of Tolstoy in addition to being his literary executor, never hesitated for a moment: "I would abolish the whole Government; police, soldiers, and everything else in the form of State organisation, and let the people go back to a simpler and a more natural form of life." I said "Yes, but they would kill one another." He replied: "They may do so, but it will not matter very much compared with present conditions where they are being killed daily, not only here but all over the world." It was a great experience to find a man who was quite willing to face all that may be involved in the complete abolition of government with its machinery and organisation. And this Chertkoff did, and was quite prepared for all that such abolition involved.

I should think there is no country in the world that has produced thinkers so varied on moral and spiritual things as Russia, and the revolution, instead of wiping this out, has really kept it alive. This comrade lectures all over the country: in addition he is one of the Tribunal which has been set up to deal with conscientious objectors to military service. In

putting him, and men like him on such Tribunals, Lenin and his colleagues have shown themselves much more liberal minded than the authorities in England, for as far as I am aware no member of the Society of Friends who was a pacifist was allowed to sit on a Tribunal anywhere in this country.

Chertkoff Junior is one of the leading men in the Co-operative movement and spends a good deal of his time in the work of education and organisation. The little paper which he is responsible for producing is one of the very few influential papers allowed to be printed. I think it appears fortnightly or monthly.

I must add a word here that Chertkoff and his Tolstoyan friends are much more active than ever before. They have freedom now, whereas under the Czar they were not allowed to propagate their ideas. They believe that Tolstoy's views of life will even yet prevail in Russia: they look for a great spiritual renaissance and think that out of Russia a new Messiah will come—not with a new gospel but with the old gospel adapted for modern life. I may as well point out here to those who say Lenin and his colleagues are intolerant of religion, that under the Czar the Salvation Army was hardly tolerated in Russia and all unorthodox sects were rigidly suppressed!

As he stood in my room, I thought of

Chertkoff as one of the prophets of old; he was so full of faith, so full of hope and so confident of the truth of the message he has to deliver. It was an inspiration to meet him, and it was fine to know that in Russia, and especially in Moscow, in the centre of what has been called a material revolution, there was yet room for such men and their message to the world.

Captain Sadoul, the French Socialist member of Parliament, who is under sentence of death in his own country for having joined the Bolsheviks and at the same time exposing the humbug and hypocrisy of the policy of the Allied Governments towards the Soviet Government, is I should think a man of about thirty-five years of age. When I visited him he was in bed, having met with an accident which had severely damaged his knee-cap. I found him one of the brightest and most genial of the personages I met in Moscow. Although he had suffered a good deal and was not likely to be fit for some days he was full of cheerfulness, and talked away of the future in the most optimistic manner. For him, like so many others, there is only one country and that is the world; there is but one nation and that is humanity.

I asked him about his relationships with Longuet. He thinks of our French comrade as a good man weakly struggling with adver-

sity. There is no doubt about it, these Bolsheviks want whole-hearted friends: they accept no half-hearted service from anyone. They are entitled to this because they themselves are not half-hearted. They do not believe in giving lip service to a cause, and especially the cause of the International. He would hear nothing of the Second International or of any other except the Moscow Third International. He told us many stories of his adventures and of the manner in which French and English officers and troops had been used to try and pull down the Soviet Government.

Here again was a man who professed precious little religious belief, but he had a great faith. To him the British Labour Movement was a great force. He rather wavered on the question of the necessity of violence in this country, agreeing that our forms and our developments were different from those of other countries. But all the same, like everyone else I spoke to, he came back to the old point that experience up to the present had shown that the governing classes had not yet given way on any essential matter and it was very doubtful if they would do so without a violent upheaval.

I want to put on record what a lovable personality this man is, the tenderness with which he looks out on life. In this respect he is a

true soldier—that is he looks on killing, not as a profession but as a horrible necessity. When I asked him about atrocities he just poured scorn on the whole thing; made no sort of exception or apology, because for him atrocities do not exist as far as the Government and the officials controlled by the Government are concerned.

During my stay he left Moscow for the Polish front, and I expect is now down there helping either to make peace or carry on the war on behalf of Russia. He is but one of the many, many thousands who have gone to Russia, called there by the spirit of the revolution, to take part in the struggle on behalf of internationalism.

I have only space to deal quite briefly with two or three other men that I met. I want to say a word about one whom I just missed—Michael Ivanovitch Kalinin, the President of the Central Executive Committee of the All Russian Soviet Congress. He was born in 1875 and comes of a peasant family and is a pure Russian. From his very earliest days his life was one of hard work. He had to help his father from his very earliest childhood, but like so many other boys in Russia, he taught himself to read. A neighbouring landowner, when the boy was thirteen, paid the cost of sending him to school. He then went to work on the estate, but very soon migrated to Petro-

grad and worked as a turner in the Putiloff works. In 1898 he joined the Social Democratic Party. A year later he was arrested and exiled. Later he was allowed to return to Reval, but he was not there long before he was again arrested and exiled to Siberia. He is married and has a wife and three children and a sixty-year-old mother who lives in the village where he was born, managing a farm.

He reckons that his chief work as President of the Executive Committee is to awaken the peasants and especially the middle class peasantry. He wants to bring the villages and towns into closer contact and establish better relationships between the one and the other. He considers his election as President of the Executive Committee proves that the Bolsheviks are anxious to unite the peasants and workers in one solid organisation. When asked one day "What do you expect from the future?" his reply was: "I am an incorrigible optimist: I am sure we will overcome all misfortunes. I am going a tour of the villages and small towns and I am sure that we shall come to an understanding with each other." He has a special train in which he travels from one part of the country to another. He speaks quite simply, sometimes to a crowd of children and on other occasions to huge crowds of workmen.

He takes his position as President, not as

an ornamental one, but as one involving downright hard work on behalf of the people. It is said that when his train arrives at a village, the peasants, men, women, and children pour out to meet him. They tell him their grievances, ask for his assistance, and invariably get the reply, not that "I will see to it," but the Soviet Government must deal with these things. Kalinin is showing us what a true leader of people should be like. He is both servant, inspirer and peace-maker.

Amongst the others that I met was Tchitcherin, the Foreign Minister, whom many people in this country know quite well. He comes of a family of nobles who have served for years in the Moscow Foreign Office. I saw him very often because I sent out a wireless message every night and it was important to see him in connection with this. He is as hard-working as ever, but curiously enough only works at night—from four in the afternoon to eight o'clock in the morning. Like all the rest of the chiefs in Moscow he works in an overcoat and muffler, because there is no fuel with which to heat his room.

Talking to him of foreign relationships is so different from talking to the Ministers of other nations; the one idea of Tchitcherin is for peace and disarmament. One thing he said to me which I shall always remember is this: "What is the use of frontiers? Why do we

want to bother about strategic points? We have no quarrel with the Fins or the Letts or with the Poles. All we want is to live at peace with all nations. We must do business with them and they with us, we do not need armaments unless we want to rob each other, and Soviet Russia wishes to rob nobody but only to live out her own life."

Lunacharsky, the Education Minister, is well known throughout the world as one of the leading educationalists. Given the chance, Russia, I am sure, is going to show us how to educate and train children, but it will take many years to get her system going. Our comrade has evolved his new system from nothing. Most of the educationalists who served under the Czar ran away or stayed to sabotage. He is definitely showing that it is possible to create an organisation, even in the midst of war and revolution, and in spite of the hostility of those who should teach. During my interview he was surrounded by his children. I ought to add he is not only Education Minister; he is also in charge of all historic buildings, churches and palaces in Russia, and it is to him we owe the fact that all these are to be preserved and kept up by the nation. He is no "iconoclast"; he thinks the past has lots to teach us and that we must hand on knowledge unimpaired and amplified to our children.

Zinovieff, who is head of the Petrograd Soviet and also Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Third International, is probably the most influential man in Russia, outside Lenin and Trotsky. I should think he was broader and more tolerant than some of his colleagues; also he appears to me to be the youngest of them all. On one thing he is very definite and that is the Third International. Talking to him, there seems little chance of compromise, but I did not gather from him or from any of the others, that a person like myself, who is opposed to the use of violence, would be excluded from membership.

The organisation of social life in Petrograd appears to me to be better done than in Moscow. Certainly the trams were running and the organisation of food supplies seemed to be better. This is not surprising, Petrograd is a more modern town and has a more modern and industrial population. I simply do not believe any of the stories of wholesale destruction of art treasures and machinery; no doubt there was some destruction and vandalism when the revolution broke out, but to nothing like the extent the enemies of Socialism would have us believe.

Kameneff, Chairman of the Moscow Soviet, I met one Saturday afternoon by invitation at a meeting of what I should call the Moscow

Town Council. He is a very capable chairman and gave me a very cordial welcome to the meeting. The members were made up of workers and soldiers; some women and one or two soldiers were present. About six or seven hundred members were in attendance, most of whom were men who had just left work. Kameneff conducted the business in much the same manner as I conduct the business of the Poplar Borough Council or Cyril Cobb conducts the business of the County Council. It is a queer thing to think of the Soviets as something ordinary and commonplace, and yet of course they are. They are just gatherings of men and women who talk or parley. I tried to make Kameneff understand that this was what I was thinking, as he was putting through report after report from the various commissars of Public Health, Education, Food Control, Co-operation, etc.

Of Krassin, Nogin, Radek, and others it is not necessary to speak here except to say that all of them appeared to me always to be busy, always working with no time for leisure or pleasure of any kind.

I also met a good many women who occupy various positions. Chief amongst these was Madame Kollontai and Madame Balabanoff, both of whom I had known a good deal about before going to Russia. Madame Kollontai devotes almost all her time to work amongst

women and has achieved considerable success in bringing Russian women into the work of administration. She and Madame Balabanoff both consider that women in Russia are more free than anywhere else in the world. The Secretary of the Moscow Soviet is a woman. It was my very bad luck to miss Trotsky. He left Moscow the day before I arrived. My colleague Griffin Barry interviewed him a few weeks previously. If Lenin is the soul of the revolution Trotsky is the living embodiment of the revolution at work. He is the organiser of victory in the field and he will be the organiser of victory in field, factory and workshop. It is his iron will and determination which will never acknowledge defeat either on the bloody or bloodless front. When he and Lenin speak at a congress or demonstration they are listened to as representing two necessary sides of the revolution, enthusiasm and constructive work. He is the one outstanding Jew in the world to-day in Russia; he is as Carnot was to the French revolution, organiser of victory over enemies at home and abroad, but, unlike Carnot, he is now organising a triumph in the sphere of Labour, and it is this which will stamp him as one of the greatest leaders of men.

# CHAPTER III

## LENIN, BOLSHEVISM AND RELIGION

LENIN is one of the most realistic men I have ever met: he speaks straight out, quite indifferent to the effect his views may have on his hearers. Talking to me about religion he said: "Do not class me as an agnostic, I am an atheist." I smiled and replied: "Very well, as you please: to me your idea of life is only the Christian way of living." He believes superstition and the worship of what is called the unknowable is responsible for keeping people in ignorance and contentment. Outside the Kremlin, on a wall facing the most sacred shrine in all Russia, the following indictment of religion is written: "Religion is the opium of the people." This one act of the Soviet Government has earned for it the most severe condemnation from all sorts and conditions of people. Tolstoyans and other dissenting bodies think the statement much

too sweeping, though all agree it is a true statement if organised religion alone is brought within the scope of its condemnation. To those who still adhere to the orthodox Church, the statement is of course rank blasphemy.

One of my chief desires in going to Russia was to discover how much truth there was in the statements that the Bolsheviks had abolished the Church and destroyed religion. I tried to see the Patriarch Tikon, head of the Russian Church, as I hoped to get a message over his own signature for the Archbishop of Canterbury and other dignatories of religion in this country, but His Eminence refused to see me, pleading he was living under domestic arrest.

I called at his house and could find no sign of imprisonment, no soldiers or police, and afterwards discovered that domestic arrest means that the Patriarch must give the Soviet authorities notice whenever he attends a conference or addresses public meetings. He is perfectly free to hold services and preach sermons, as often as he desires. The limitation on his activities re meetings is due to the fact, which is beyond disproof, that some bishops and priests have used their high office to undermine the authority of the Government. The secretary of the Patriarch was good enough to give me an introduction to a leading priest in

Moscow who could speak English. I found him not so much angry as hurt. He seemed to feel humiliated that it should be possible for anyone to think of religion as opium for the people. So far as he was able to judge, the men responsible for the statement—that is, men like Lenin, Trotsky, Lunacharsky and others—were all honourable, clean living, decent men, alienated from the Church in what to him seemed quite an inconceivable manner. Yet as we talked on, he himself touched the core of the whole matter, when with tears in his voice he admitted that in the days of the Czar the Church was nothing more than the handmaiden of autocracy and tyranny of the worst description. She had failed in her mission because she had been tied hand and foot to the powers of the State, never daring to raise a voice of protest against the infamies of Siberia or the terrorist methods associated with the dungeons of the fortress of Peter and Paul. Now was the day of travail and sorrow both for Russia and the Church. Perhaps what there was of true religion would now be able to find better expression because the Church, no longer tied to Governments, could with freedom deliver her message of peace and brotherhood.

This priest was one of the sanest, fairest critics of the Government. When I asked him, " Are you quite free to carry on the work

of the Church?" he replied without the slightest hesitation, "Yes." When I asked if the Government had persecuted and killed priests, he hesitated, and finally replied that he did not think the Government desired either the persecution or murder of priests, but there had been both. At the same time whenever any case was brought to the notice of the Government steps were immediately taken to bring those responsible to book. He was quite emphatic that Lenin and his colleagues, in spite of their own theories about religion, did desire that everybody should have perfect freedom of conscience and the right to follow whatever creed they chose. This fact is borne out by what can be seen at all hours of the day in the streets of all the towns and villages. The churches are open, people go in and out by the score, and on Sundays by the hundreds. In addition, individual men and women stop to cross themselves and pray outside the innumerable churches to be found everywhere. In these circumstances it is extraordinary to me that any Christian people should be worried about the position of the Church in Russia. She has perfect freedom to preach her gospel, conduct her services, and worship God in her own way.

The real thing that is wrong from the official standpoint, is not that the Government is what it is—frankly materialist—but that the

preaching of one form of religion is no longer financially endowed by the State. The Church has been disestablished and disendowed: all able-bodied men and women must now earn their own bread or else get maintenance from those who choose to give voluntary subscriptions. In adopting this policy the Bolshevik Government has but followed the lead given them by M. Clemenceau in France, who led the campaign which ended in the disestablishment and disendowment of the French Church and the abolition of religious houses in France. And of course they have followed in the footsteps of the Right Honourable David Lloyd George, who was the chief protagonist in the struggle which has ended in the disestablishment and disendowment of the Welsh Church, and, as the right honourable gentleman puts it, has set up in the principality a new descendant of "St. David."

It is extraordinary how circumstances and conditions can confuse and colour our judgments. No one thinks of Clemenceau or Lloyd George as anything but highly respectable members of society: the one is more or less a free thinker in addition to his other qualities, described as those of the "tiger." The other is a nonconformist whose first step on the ladder of fame was taken in support of the cause which some Christians in England

and elsewhere call "robbing God" when applied to Russia.

My friendly priest also discussed the marriage question with me. He is not a bit upset that the marriage rite is a civil matter, and here I must point out that in compelling marriages to be registered in a State or Communal registry office the Bolsheviks are only doing exactly what has been done in France and America for very many years. In our own country tens of thousands of people are married by the civil authority. In fact no marriage is legal in England except those which take place in an Anglican Church, unless a registrar is present. No Roman Catholic or Free Church service is recognised; always it is the civil functionary whose presence gives legality to the proceedings. So why people should lie about Russia and say the Bolsheviks have destroyed the sanctity of marriage I cannot understand. A couple, desirous of being married, notify the proper civil authority, and if afterwards they desire to go through the religious ceremony which to them makes of their marriage a sacrament, they are perfectly free to do so.

I have dealt with the case of children elsewhere. I need only say in passing that the abolition of all questions concerning legitimacy or illegitimacy and the clearing out of the vocabulary of the wretched word "bastard" is

not altogether approved by the Church, but from all I heard from friends and foes of the Church in Russia, I do not think the standard of sexual morality has ever been very high. The lives of celibate and married priests have at all times left very much to be desired. In any case, all of us who think have long ago given up the idea that it was our duty to assist the Almighty in visiting the sins of the parents upon the children, if for no other reason than that no child is responsible for his parents. I certainly did not choose my parents, neither did my children choose theirs.

The divorce law is very simple. If two persons being married agree that they cannot any longer live together in peace and harmony, they may be divorced without further enquiry, but if one partner objects then enquiry must take place. Divorce is granted on equal terms: there is not one standard for women and another for men. I think we shall all make a mistake if we imagine that on questions of sex there can be one rigid rule for all nations or even for all people within a nation. The longer I live the more convinced monogamist I am, but, and it is a very big but, I have seen so much downright misery, so much deceit and lying makebelieve by married people trying to make the outside world believe they love one another, when indeed they loath and detest each other, that I support any

rational means whereby such people may secure freedom from a tie which only degrades them both. The period of marriage which must elapse before a divorce can be applied for is six months. This sounds a very short time, but I am not convinced this is important. If people find themselves totally unfitted, unsuited to each other, the sooner it is realised and acted upon the better. In Russia and elsewhere the Church considers marriage a sacrament and binding for life; so do I, but this cannot be imposed by a law or a Church ordinance or by a priest saying it is. Only by the conscious intelligent assent of men and women is such a decree binding, and the vast multitude of marriages are just marriages, sometimes for convenience, sometimes for love, very very seldom does the question of religion or sacraments enter in.

So far I have dealt only with the relations existing between the orthodox Church and the Government. Like everywhere else, there is within the Russian Church a revolutionary movement which bids fair to undermine the theories of Lenin and his friends, that religion plays no part in the life of a people. The following statement shows that with the coming of the Socialist republic the dry bones of theology have begun to stir and that once more the teachings of Jesus are going to have a chance. I have verified the truth of the

report as I give it here and can vouch for its accuracy. I may say it has been circulated throughout the whole of Russia, and as is usual in such cases, the Bishop of Penza and his followers have been excommunicated:

"An event which will lead to great consequences has occurred in the Russian Church. A Conference of Russian priests took place some months ago at Penza, which was presided over by Bishop Vladimir. At this conference the priests decided to break with the Greek Orthodox Church and establish a new Church on lines, as Bishop Vladimir expressed it, that would more closely approach the purity of the primitive Church and abolish the pomp and glory of the great princes of the modern Church. The significance of this event is that it proves that the Russian revolution is finally rooted in the soil of Russia. The structure of the Church, like the whole superstructure of society, as Karl Marx taught, is based upon the economic foundations of a given society. The development of commerce, which was later to lead to capitalism, was accompanied by a revolt against the Church. One might say that Protestantism is the religious expression of liberalism and commercialism. It is significant, therefore, to observe that what appears to be the beginning of a "Reformation" in Russia aims at the primitive Christian Church, which, as is known, preached Communism. It will therefore be quite in keeping with social laws that in so far as the belief in God is still maintained by the Russian people, the worship of this God will take the form that is adapted to the economic conditions of Russia. Communism has come to stay in Russia, and will be expressed in the religious beliefs of the Russian people."

It may be said one swallow does not make a summer, but those of us who know the tremendous effect the work of Fathers Conrad Noel, James Adderly, Lewis Donaldson, Gobat, Widdrington, the late Canon Scott Holland and others, working through the Church Socialist League, has had on the English Church, may understand and appreciate the sort of influence Bishop Vladimir and his friends will have on the outlook of the Church in Russia. If Christianity is to live in that country, it must become the exponent of the new social order, and such it appears to me it will inevitably become.

The net result of all my conversations with people of varying opinions is to convince me that in Russia there is for everybody perfect freedom to worship God. No sect is favoured at the expense of another, no creed will be supported against another. Each and all are obliged to depend on the freewill offerings of disciples and friends. The cathedrals and churches remain sacred for the purposes for which they were erected. Those beautiful towers, one or two in number, injured during the revolution are to be repaired at the expense of the Government. It is the Church which must now make good. After centuries of sloth, during which her Bishops and leaders have been the servants, not of God but of the Czars, she is now free. In Moscow itself there

are 1600 churches, or at least something approaching that number. There is but one statement written up by order of the Government declaring "Religion is the opium of the people." What will the future say of a Church which fails in its mission by refusing to accept the great tasks which lie before it, and refuses by its works to endeavour to prove the falsity of the charge laid at its doors.

Long years ago a prophet of Israel looked over the valley of dry bones and cried out "Can these dry bones live?" Often in Moscow, driving and walking about the streets, seeing the beautiful churches and the people making obeisance to the Ikons, these words would come flooding into my mind, and I remembered some other words: "Not by might but by My spirit saith the Lord." Surely Christians will ultimately judge the Bolshevik dealings with the Russian Church and religion in the spirit of these words, and surely also we who think there must be a religious ethical basis for life will believe that the Russian Church shall rise purified and sanctified from the troubles of to-day and with a whole-hearted purpose join Lenin and his comrades in recreating the moral and material life of the great nation which for nearly six long weary years has been the prey of war, pestilence and famine.

# CHAPTER IV

## CO-OPERATION, TRADE AND BUSINESS

In a striking appeal to the Russian people for loyalty and effort on behalf of the nation, Lenin said: "All Soviet Russia will become a United All Russian Co-operative Society of Workers." This is the keynote and explanation of the Soviet Government's attitude towards the old Russian Co-operative Movement. Socialism, Communism, Bolshevism, mean co-operation, and co-operation means all three. It has taken months of weary arguing and much effort to overcome the open and avowed hostility of co-operators towards the proposal to absorb them as part of the organisation of the State. I am not sure it is yet overcome.

No one should be surprised at this. The Co-operative Movement everywhere has prided itself on the voluntary character of its work. In England, Co-operators and Socialists are only just commencing to understand how much their theories of life are akin to each other.

The Bolsheviks from the start found themselves short-handed, understaffed for the work of organising the nation. It is always easy for a despot like a Czar to carry on his Government: he has only to give the order and people must obey. But in a society which is endeavouring to put into practice the forms of democracy the business is more difficult. The worst thing about an autocracy, even when it is overthrown, rests in the fact that the evil it has done lives after it. Lenin and his colleagues found themselves with a nation of over one hundred million people and a country of thousands of square miles to administer, with nearly all the old rulers and leaders of the people hostile. In spite of this, the country is slowly being organised and made safe from the evils arising out of the blockade and foreign wars.

Critics and investigators who go to Russia to see the revolution at work must bear in mind the fact that Russia has seen nearly six years of war, and for the last two and a half years she has been faced also with civil war. Consequently the Government and its administrators have had no chance. We shall all make a great mistake unless from the outset we recognise these facts when discussing organisation of labour and distribution of food under the Soviets. Life is becoming more tolerable, the people who have assisted in this

work and brought some amount of order out of disorder are those co-operators, who abandoning their opposition to Government organisation and have wholeheartedly thrown in their lot with the Government.

It was my good fortune to meet and talk with co-operators whose political views were neither Bolshevik nor anti-Bolshevik—and found them all eager for peace. They have accepted the Soviet Government as the only possible Government for Russia at the present time, and, like good Russians, all feel that their desire for a kind of voluntary communism must give way for the present to what they consider is the best interest of the country. Russian co-operators outside Russia can have no idea how much these men and their friends have done towards making life tolerable. One of the worst results of the blockade has been this ignorance of what was happening in Russia.

In company with some friends, I went out to a Convalescent Home for the purpose of interviewing Andre Leshava, President of the Central Union of Russian Co-operators. He is a man of middle age. We found him tired out and weary owing to the tremendous amount of work he has had entrusted to his care. He has been a co-operator for many years and also a business man connected with large insurance corporations. He is now act-

ing as chief of the organisation for collecting and distributing foodstuffs and other necessaries of life. It is difficult for an outsider to understand where the business of the Food Ministry begins and ends, for as I understand it, the co-operators do all the practical work. I think the Food Control department decides the rations, the duty of the co-operative organisations being to see that people get what they are entitled to.

In the early days of the revolution, the peasants would not part with their stocks because the Government was only able to give paper money in exchange for foodstuffs, and this money was almost valueless owing to the fact there was no possibility of exchanging money for clothes, boots, tools, seeds, etc. In these circumstances even soldiers found it difficult to get the stores so badly needed by the people in the towns. This is now changed. The peasants willingly trade on credit with the co-operators, accepting the Rouble paper money as Government scrip to be redeemable later on. From this it will be seen that the co-operative movement in Russia has become what many English co-operators desire it to become here; that is, an integral part of food control and the sole organisation for the distribution of the necessaries of life to the people. I was told by some others besides Leshava that the Russian character lends itself

very readily to the work of co-operation and that the only reason for the antagonism which arose at the time of the revolution was due to ignorance of the aims and objects of the Bolsheviks. People did not realise that fundamentally all those who wished to organise industry as a social service were the natural allies of those who wished to establish voluntary co-operation.

Leshava, when asked what he claimed was the object of the system of State co-operation of which he is chief, replied that the whole conception was based on that of the Rochdale Pioneers. Co-operation as understood in Russia is the "spontaneous effort of the nation to supply its own needs and become a series of municipal and communal households." The peasants who at one time bitterly opposed what they considered State interference, acknowledge the new law which takes from them a certain proportion of foodstuffs and other products of their farms, and are slowly realising that co-operation is a much bigger thing than the mere collection or distribution of goods. All the old district and provincial societies with limited aims and objects have been absorbed or abolished: there cannot be any sectional jealousies because there are no sections. The productive and distributive are parts of one organisation.

Working peasants, who for the first time

find themselves free of the domination of either landlord or rich peasants, are slowly learning the benefits to be derived from intercourse and co-operation with each other. It is always difficult to make people anywhere understand that their wellbeing depends on each other. I think, however, it will be easier in Russia than anywhere else, as the peasants are very simple and have not yet been spoiled by the commercialism of America and Europe. Alongside the small holdings of the ordinary peasant the Soviet Government, using the machinery of the co-operative movement, is endeavouring to teach the benefits of mass production. Some of the older agriculturists pour scorn on the efforts and prophesy failure. As I listened to one friend who had nothing but scorn and contempt to heap on all such schemes, I remembered my own experience at Hollesley Bay where a scheme of co-operative agriculture in England was ruined by the same kind of criticism. The results will be different in Russia because the Government wants only one thing, and that is the very highest standard of life for all the people by the co-operative effort of the whole nation. Once the townspeople are able to give the peasants what they need in the way of clothes, seeds, tools and other necessaries of life, all friction will have passed away between artisan and peasant; once the advocates of mass production are able

to demonstrate the superiority of their system in giving a fuller life to all, there will be no question as to which system will carry the day. Soviet Russia is determined that no such sordid, miserable, mean class of peasant as those which the peasant profiteering system of France and Belgium has created shall exist in Russia.

As everywhere else, man does not live by bread alone. There are great fisheries on the Volga at Astrachan and elsewhere. It was not pleasant being told how British airmen bombed fishermen in order to prevent the industry being carried on; that the British Government had created a new republic at Azerbaijan for the sole purpose of making it impossible for the Russian people to get oil from the wells at Baku.

I cannot help saying here, how impossible it is for me to discriminate between one form of killing and another. I lived in East London all through the war, except for twelve months, and know from experience what air raids are, and was often furiously savage in my denunciation of such acts committed against unarmed, inoffensive people. Yet in Russia, fishermen are killed by airmen, and thousands of children, women and men are starved to death because of a blockade carried out by Christian soldiers under orders of a Christian Government.

The fisheries of Russia are being organised co-operatively, as is all industry, but this will be useless unless the oil from Baku is available for use on the Volga steamers and for locomotives. I have read in *The Times* that it is lack of foresight and organising ability which has produced the food and fuel shortage in Russia. This is nonsense: a great part of the shortage is due to the shutting down of traffic on the Volga, caused solely by lack of the oil which the British authorities preferred should pour into the sea rather than be used for the service of the people of Russia.

There is one other thing to be said on the question of co-operation. As is well understood by all who have the most elementary knowledge of Russia, there is much, very much, ignorance amongst all classes. Millions, at the time of the fall of Czardom, could neither read nor write. Even now painted signs appear outside shops describing what is on sale within because people cannot read. This fact alone makes all work of reconstruction and reform doubly hard.

Andre Leshava, like all other leaders of thought and action in Russia, was keen to know what our wholesale co-operative societies intended to do with regard to international trade. He realises that Russia cannot stand alone as a co-operative State but must find some bond of union with other lands, and

naturally looks to England as the home of co-operation.

There ought to be no difficulty about international trade and business generally, if those who desire trade with Russia are animated with the true co-operative spirit. There will be difficulty with those whose sole desire is, by means of trade relationships, to re-establish competitive commercialism with all its horrors. That the pure and simple communism aimed at by the Bolshevik revolution will, of necessity, be modified, is of course true. Russia, as part of a world made up of commercial nations, cannot live her life exactly as she pleases, and the strength of the Bolsheviks lies in the fact that one and all of their chief men understand this.

Krassin, who is Commissar for Trade, Transport and Commerce at home and abroad, is under no delusions as to the conditions under which the ordinary capitalists will consent to do business with his fellow countrymen; but to be forewarned is to be forearmed. Consequently when concessions are granted or business done with great monopolist concerns, very severe watertight conditions will be laid down for the purpose of preventing the servants of capitalism corrupting the minds of the Russian workers. Krassin, in his interview with me, laid stress on all the vital needs of Russia, but was emphatic in his declaration that real busi-

ness could not be re-established unless peace was assured.

Since my return I noticed in the Press a desire to belittle the efforts of the Soviet Government for the establishment of trade relationships and attempts made to prove the insincerity of Tchitcherin because he insists on the impossibility of a complete restoration of trade relationship without peace. This is not merely a question of morals but of practical necessity. The fact that nearly seventy per cent. of the railway transport of Russia is out of action and that what is effective must be used to feed and equip armies in the field, is not only almost entirely the cause of suffering and misery everywhere; it also makes it impossible to move goods, especially flax and grain, for transport. There is a further reason: Tchitcherin and his colleagues believe the beneficial results of opening up Russia to international trade will be shared by all nations, and they are not prepared to assist in stabilising the exchanges of Europe until the Governments of Europe are prepared to grant the people of Russia peace on terms of equality and honour.

Discussing this question of trade with Comrade Nogin, who is head of the Central Union of Textile Workers, I was surprised to find how clear and definite are the proposals for a resumption of trade. Neither he nor Krassin

see any difficulty as to arrangements for banking or credit. No private corporations or individuals are allowed, or in future will be allowed, to set up these institutions. The National Bank of Russia is the only bank through which business can be done with Russia. There is, I am told, a considerable amount of gold available for the purchase of goods, but Krassin is not anxious that business should be done merely by exchanging gold for goods. He prefers exchanging goods for goods. This is where the transport question comes in: if the accumulated stores are to be set free Russia must be able to secure at least two thousand locomotives. The infamous embargo put on the Baku oil wells by the British must also be removed.

There is another outstanding fact which proves that the Russian people themselves do not intend to go back to capitalism and the Czardom. In spite of dissensions and disagreements all co-operative societies are now united in deed as well as word. From Archangel right away to Omsk all the small and large societies are federated. The biggest societies in Siberia are joined with those of the Moscow province. To understand what this means we in England should try to realise the effect which will be produced when all the wholesale and retail productive and distributive co-operative societies from John o'

Groats to Land's End are federated and working together as a single unit. This is what has happened in Russia, and although many of the original co-operators shake their heads and are not certain what the outcome will be, others are confident the co-operative ideal will prevail.

Walking through the streets of villages and towns in Russia, the fact that most shops and stores are shut, gives the appearance of deadness, as if all life had departed. People like myself who all at once find themselves in an environment where there is no noise of what is called trade and commerce, are apt to imagine that nothing is being done. Many people who have come out of Russia have brought stories of the absolute wreck and ruin of every sort of private and national enterprise. No one can deny that very terrible shortage and privation have been and still are being endured by masses of men and women: when however we remember that huge armies have been armed, fed and transported to at least four different battle fronts, that over one hundred million people have been fed, clothed and housed, however imperfectly, it is not only difficult to believe that industry is at a standstill, it is simply incredible. What has happened in Russia is just this: all the old useless forms of labour are, to a large extent, abolished. There is no advertising, no illicit

adulteration, no opening of competitive shops and stores. Everything in the form of labour has been reduced to the one word "utility." The production of food is carried on in the largest factories possible. Bread is baked in huge loaves, which are afterwards distributed at central stores. Food kitchens and public restaurants are for the most part very small and not overclean, but they all save labour by centralising distribution.

Clothing stores are in the same category. Most of these are very large and controlled by the local Soviets. Tickets enabling the holders to buy up to a stated value are distributed to all who earn them. By this means clothing is secured at cheaper prices.

The aim, however, of all organisation in Russia is to abolish the use of money. In some parts of Petrograd all houses are rent free, trams are free, food is free, and also necessaries such as boots and clothing. Consequently there is less and less scope for private enterprise, but the idea of money and money-making takes a good deal of killing. The trains going daily into Moscow and Petrograd carry thousands of peasants and speculators whose one idea is to make money. The Government endeavours by very drastic measures to put down this kind of thing, so far with only partial success. The oldest market in Russia is in Moscow. It is held in a very

broad roadway over a mile long and in some places twice as wide as the biggest road in London. At this place every day in the week, every sort of article of wearing apparel, furniture and food is on sale. It is illegal either to buy or to sell certain food stuffs in this way, but in spite of very severe penalties it continues mainly because so many people are hungry. I asked Lenin why it was more determined efforts were not made to put an end to this sort of thing. He replied that the Government felt it was impossible really to get rid of the spirit of capitalism until everybody was assured of a sufficiency of everything needed for a decent life. Once peace was signed and they were able to get mass production in full swing there would be such an abundance for everybody that no one would need to be mean or covetous.

I was struck by the fact that the central stores were perfect hives of activity. If it is true shops are closed, it is not true to say shopping has been put an end to. Neither must we imagine that in the case of clothing everything has been reduced to a dead level of uniformity. In the case of women's hats and bonnets, there is one big room at the co-operative stores devoted entirely to these, and the proof that variety of headgear for women is obtainable is evident to all who care to use their eyes in the streets. The manufacture of

a sort of cotton cloth from flax, of which Nogin and his friends are very proud, has enabled the clothing stores to place a variety of such goods on sale for women and men. Therefore in one more instance the Bolsheviks are demonstrating that Socialism, in spite of red ties and trilby hats in England, does not mean that everybody shall wear standard suits or anything else so stupid. I would like to stress the fact that though shops are closed, these big central stores are at all times very busy, that the chiefs as well as their subordinates are kept well occupied, and that being a servant of the Soviet Government means having plenty of work to do. The volume of necessary business in Russia is still very considerable, but is better organised. All the useless competitive labour associated with trade and commerce here and elsewhere is gradually being eliminated. Once peace is secured, all the problems which now perplex friend and foe will be cleared away.

There can be no doubt of the fact that even now, with all the coercion, misery and suffering, there is a better, more equal distribution of the necessaries of life than ever before. It is of small importance whether shops are open or shut except in so far as in either case they affect the equitable distribution of the things needed by the people. The Nevsky Prospect, with its rows of fine shops, now nearly all

closed, may look like a desolated area; shops with similar purpose are also closed in the working class districts. It is not merely that the super-abundance of servers of the rich have been abolished, but also the superfluous shops and stores which used to fleece the poor are also gone, and this is a fact for rejoicing rather than sorrowing.

As I saw things in Russia, the social and industrial organisation is slowly but surely moving towards a complete thorough-going co-operative organisation of life. I do not think this will be reached in all its fulness for a generation, perhaps two. I am certain though there will be no going back, that gradually the coercive measures will give way before the willing enthusiastic agreement of all sections of the people to serve the commonweal. People ask, will ever the Russian business people go back to Russia? I think many of them will do so. I also hope the co-operators out of Russia will also go back and settle down to the work of organising their great country. Nowhere in the whole wide world is there such an abundance of natural wealth as in Russia, and nowhere is there, in my opinion, a people more capable of being organised and led along the road leading to the Communist State than in that great country.

# CHAPTER V

## TRADE UNIONS AND LABOUR ORGANISATION

THE Trade Union Movement has not been abolished in Russia and is not likely to be. The Headquarters of the Federation of Russian workers is to be found in the Nobles' Club at Moscow. It was certainly a happy thought which placed this fine building at the service of organised labour. A big discussion and controversy is going on at present as to whether in the future organisation of industry a Government Labour Department will be necessary side by side with Trade Union organisation. No one can yet say what modifications of the Communist system business and trade relationships with the outside world will require. It is certain some very serious modifications will take place. The granting of concessions to foreign corporations, the promise to pay the national debt of Russia and to compensate foreigners for losses of money and property owing to

the revolution will compel this whether the Soviet or any other Government in Russia likes it or not.

Comrade Melnichansky is Secretary of the Executive Committee of the All Russian Federation of Trade Unions and one of the most clear-headed of the labour men I met in Russia. He is a communist, who before the revolution was an exile working for his living in America, and like thousands of others was waiting for the call to come which would take him back to fight for freedom in his native land. That call came in 1917 when with Trotsky and several others he started his journey home. The British Government, he told me, is more responsible for the presence of Trotsky and himself in Russia than anyone else. Had the authorities representing Britain in Canada so desired they could very easily have detained these revolutionaries when they were held in custody both on board ship and on land. Melnichansky tells with great glee the story of how he and his friends chaffed the British officers for being representatives of a Government afraid of a handful of Bolsheviks.

Since meeting him I have met people who are still of opinion that the Germans bribed Lenin and his friends to make the revolution and gave them safe conduct across Germany for that purpose. It seems to me the charge

may just as truthfully be laid at the door of the British Government. In any case these Russian revolutionaries home from America are the leaders and inspirers of nearly all National work and in the end, it is they, no matter what form of organisation is set up who will determine how the business of organising industry is to be carried on. They are all keen Trade Unionists and in addition are class conscious communists. Already the whole work of labour exchange is in the hands of the unions; where out of work pay is needed they pay it; when labour is needed to be moved from one place to another they make the necessary arrangements; sickness and sanatorium benefit is managed by the unions and so also is the payment of maternity benefit. Hours of labour and workshop conditions are variable in different trades and places; owing to the great shortage and lack of transport the eight hour day has been altered to permit of overtime so that a total of twelve hours per day can be worked. The school age of 16 has, in certain instances, been lowered owing to shortage of labour. These facts cause the enemies of the new regime much rejoicing. They appear to imagine it is possible to create ideal conditions in the midst of war and civil war. When this is proved impossible it is argued that the whole system is a failure.

However, all that is needed to enable our Russian brothers to prove their ability to organise and live as Communists is peace and trade relationships. Meantime the Trade Unions come nearer and nearer to being the dominant factor in organising industry, always with the aid of experts. It is a wondrous thing these revolutionists are trying to do under almost impossible conditions. I have always reckoned that given a peaceful transformation, it would be difficult to convince people they should do their best, and submit to discipline for the service of each other. Yet in Russia, with all the disorder and sordid misery, they do appear to be creating that sort of spirit, and translating it into everyday life.

It is a wonderful achievement to have settled the woman question as it has been settled in Russia. I saw women and men, youths and girls, and all classes, at work snow cleaning. I think from the capitalist standpoint it would have been considered waste. A few good snow ploughs would have cleared a path down the streets quicker and better. But none were available and so everybody is expected once a month to put in eight hours at the work of snow cleaning. While the snow is soft it is an easy job; when it is trampled and frozen hard, pickaxes and crowbars are needed and women find it rather

difficult and laborious work. Yet it has to be done, and as I very often stood for a moment and looked at those who were doing this work, however unaccustomed they were for the job, I do not think anybody was injured. It is not only in snow cleaning that women and girls work on terms of equality with men. They are on an equal footing in the Unions and in all industries are paid the same wages as men, being allowed the privilege of producing 15 per cent. less than men. Maternity benefit consists of eight weeks' holiday on full pay before and after childbirth, extra food and nourishment during those weeks, and extra food afterwards if the baby is nursed. I do not believe that anywhere else in the world women are so free and so respected and cared for as in Russia.

One problem which was rather difficult of solution was that of holidays. Under the old regime there were innumerable holidays connected with the Church. The Soviet Government rules out all interference with the Church and religion in order to prevent dissatisfaction. All workers are given the choice of ten working days a year on which they may, if they desire, keep holiday. In addition the Bolsheviks have set apart eight days including May Day as national holidays, so there are eighteen separate holidays in a year. Besides these, the workers are allowed two weeks' holiday a year,

all on full pay. These privileges are not in full operation yet owing to the war.

There is also a very firm belief in the doctrine of one day's rest in seven which results in no morning papers on Monday. There are no Sunday papers as such; all papers come out on Sunday morning but no evening papers on that day. This enables all workers connected with the production of newspapers to have Sunday free. I wonder when newspaper workers in this country will demand one day's rest in seven and refuse to accept a standard of living dependent on overtime and a seven-day week. Theatres are open on Sunday and closed on Monday so that the actors and performers may get their day of rest. I found this was a rule also in some Scandinavian countries. I should be thankful to see it adopted here. The trade unions also manage the distribution of tickets for the National Theatres: they are allowed two-thirds for each performance. I think there are eight theatres paid for directly out of national funds.

Another question very seriously discussed while I was in Russia was Trotsky's appeal for a labour army. Everybody agreed that all able-bodied citizens must take their part in the work of supplying the needs of the community, but some, especially the anarchists, were very sceptical indeed as to the wisdom of allowing labour to be organised in armies

for mass production. Trotsky in his famous speech delivered at a great meeting held in the National Theatre, Moscow, last February did not attempt to minimise the danger to individual freedom, but based his case for this innovation entirely on the fact that by no other means could present day difficulties be overcome. He swept away the idea that men like himself desired to rule and boss; pointed out that no revolution could exist without work; that it was not yet certain that Western Europe and America would go to the assistance of Russia, and, even if they did, it still remained the duty of Russia to re-create and build up her own internal life and industry.

I heard much criticism from friends and enemies of the Bolsheviks, but not a single critic had any better proposal to make. The soldiers in the Red Army seem to have a clearer conception than others of what is wanted. When it was proposed to demobilise the seventh army and send the soldiers home because they were no longer needed to fight Denikin, the men got together and sent a request to Trotsky asking that instead of going home they should remain mobilised and under the same officers be allowed to work as a disciplined army of labour. This was the start of the Labour army. Someone coined the phrase, "The bloodless front," and soon

everybody was talking about the triumph and victories on this new front. Many tons of coal were raised, wood was cut, bridges repaired, railway tracks cleared, and in a thousand ways the enthusiasm formerly given to the work of slaughter was transferred to the victories of peace.

If Russia has her way she will have no standing army and will disarm, but this depends on her neighbours and mainly on Britain. If she and America disarm so also will Russia; meantime when peace is signed the army will become a militia; battalions will be formed on a territorial basis. It is proposed that this militia will be thus enabled to live at home where massed production in farming, railway construction, mining, etc., is carried on. Men will work together, get their training together and in the event of war, will be organised together in battalions for fighting purposes.

By this means it is hoped to obviate the barrack system and get rid of the existing evils by which millions of men are segregated apart from their families. There is one other thing to bear in mind: it is this; the one great industrial principle which animates Lenin and his friends is "Nothing without Labour." "He who will not work, neither shall he eat," and this surely should be the watchword of all Socialists.

I shall have occasion to deal with education in another chapter. Here I only need say that the unions are very keen on adult education. Lenin has given a great impetus to this by his famous message, "To get more we must produce more; to produce more we must know more." Ignorance is looked upon as a crime against the commonweal. Universities are springing up everywhere; university extension lectures and classes are held in order to substitute knowledge and understanding for the deadly superstition and ignorance fostered and supported by the Czars and their handmaiden, the Church.

In order that I might see people at work, I asked Melnichansky to arrange visits which he very readily did for the next day. Going round one workshop we met men who had not seen our friend since the days before the revolution and I had the pleasure of hearing the story of the effect created by the revolution on socialists, anarchists and communists living abroad; how all their dislike of each other's methods seemed to be forgotten, and how one and all decided to get back to Russia at the earliest possible moment. It is not as well known as it should be, that thousands of workers in Russia to-day were, before the war, exiles who at the call of revolution gave up all they possessed in order to go home and assist the revolution. I met one group of such men

and women in this workshop; most were anarchists, all of them skilled workers. In New York they had established a toolmaker's business and conducted it on purely co-operative lines. All through the war they had been able to secure lots of work and consequently shared considerable profits. When the revolution took place these people without a moment's hesitation wound up their business and took ship to Odessa. For a time they were able to work in a town in South Russia; the advance of Denikin's army last summer drove them to Moscow. I discovered them in a very large suite of workshops carrying on the business of toolmaking.

They conduct the workshop on strictly co-operative lines: there is a freedom and equality about the organisation which is apparent from the moment of entry. The buildings were given to this group by the Government. All the fitting up, erection of machinery and general planning has been done by the workers themselves. Many of the machines and tools, formerly used in America, were brought to Russia. Denikin's army destroyed some and as is usual other parts were lost or damaged on the journey. What could be saved is now in full use: lots more though is needed and consequently much of the work done at this factory is on jobs which would be classed under the head of capital expendi-

ture. At this shop I received my first lesson in workers' organisation and control. The work is organised differently from what I saw elsewhere and is evidence that when conditions are more settled industry will not be organised on one cast iron basis but that groups of workers will devise their own best methods for carrying on the work of the community.

As many of those employed here could speak English, it was possible to discuss without an interpreter. My friend Griffin Barry discussed matters with one group, and I had another group in a separate part of the workshop. The managers are elected by the workers on the principle one person one vote: all real grievances are settled by the vote of all; rules and regulations are discussed and approved. All deferred to expert opinion on matters requiring special knowledge, but each worker was expected and encouraged to make suggestions as to how to increase output and at the same time reduce exhausting labour to a minimum. Holidays, sick pay, overtime, all these matters were discussed and settled by committees representing the workers.

As we walked round and talked, first at one machine, then at another, the thought that came to my mind was, how very much alike all engineering and toolshops are, and what a very little difference there is in the lay out of one set of machines and another; and as I

looked at the makers' name-plates on the various machines it was interesting to realise that German, British and American manufacturers all had a part in supplying machinery for these Russian shops, proving how dependent we all are one upon the other.

In discussing conditions, all without exception complained of lack of food and fuel. Undoubtedly these men and women accustomed to a fairly high standard of living in America are bitterly disappointed at finding themselves cold and hungry in Russia. Although they spoke bitterly of the shortage, not one of them suggested it was the fault of the Government or that a change of Government would remedy matters. Each man who discussed this question asked "When are you British workers going to compel your Government to leave us alone." I was obliged to hear this question again and again while in Russia, and found it very difficult to answer.

This workshop and its organisation is a sample of the kind of organisation which will very largely develop and increase so soon as peace is secured. Undoubtedly there is at present very much central control: at the same time individual initiative and local organisation is being encouraged. Even now, when there is admittedly much central organisation it has been found possible to permit small groups of people such as these, to or-

ganise an industry and make it a federated part of the whole system. Whatever may be necessary to-day in the way of centralised organisation and control, there are too many anarchists in Russia and the Russian character is too "anti-authority" to make it possible for any Government bearing the semblance of democracy to impose upon it a rigid system of organisation.

Melnichansky also took us round a couple of factories organised and controlled by the State or under rules and regulations made by the State, which also includes participation of workers in the management. Aeroplanes are now being entirely manufactured in Moscow as also are motors and bicycles. The workshops through which we passed consisted of the toolmaking, engineering, woodworking and assembling shops and also the foundry. Here the organisation of actual work and output is in the hands of three persons. There was no pretence at co-operation as in the previous shop we had inspected. There were organisers and managers, but all were subject to control of the three persons, two of whom were elected by the vote of the workers and one appointed by a sectional committee of the Supreme Council of Economics.

I believe that all State factories are managed in a similar manner. Factories formerly controlled by local Soviets are now, I am told,

managed on similar lines to the State factories. All the work of the factories I visited where some three to four thousand persons are employed is heavily handicapped for lack of raw material and fuel. The foundry compared with any other I have seen was very inefficient solely because proper fuel is not available. In spite of every drawback there was, however, clear, unmistakeable evidence that by enthusiasm and effort production was increasing week by week. Before the war much of the machinery used in Russia was imported. French firms to a large extent controlled the manufacture of aeroplanes: it was the custom to assemble parts brought from abroad, but not actually to manufacture. Imports were stopped owing to the blockade and consequently the Russians, if they wanted aeroplanes, motors and machinery were obliged to settle down to do the work of manufacture themselves. From the outset they had been handicapped owing to lack of transport, and because of this shortage we see in Russia the extraordinary spectacle of multitudes of people cold and hungry in a country enormously rich in natural resources of every kind and with an abundance of foodstuffs. The Allied blockade in keeping out the means whereby the transport system could be dealt with has destroyed thousands of lives, but the wicked wars waged with the help of British gold, guns and muni-

tions by Kolchak, Denikin, Yudendich and others is responsible for the suffering and death of tens of thousands. Russia could have laughed at the blockade if her organisers and experts had been allowed peace to organise for the service of the nation. But as is the case everywhere else, when war comes the business of killing and destruction has the first call on the energy and resources of the nation. In spite of this it is the fact that old industries have been to some extent kept going and new ones started. These works of which I am now writing prove this. Very proudly was I shown new aeroplanes made on British models all ready for use—every scrap of material and work being Russian. In order to prove beyond doubt that the machines were perfect Barry and myself were invited to get into one and go for a spin in the air. Although we refused a young airman who formerly belonged to the upper classes took one out and within a few seconds was almost out of sight, using as motive power an evil smelling sort of spirit which necessity has created for the service of Russia. It is something for these so called dreamers and theorists to be able to demonstrate their ability to manufacture such highly specialised machines as aeroplanes. Could they but get the raw material they would very soon build all the locomotives they need: but the raw material

is far away so they must import some of the finished articles before they can hope to get going.

The organisation of each department of these works was orderly and efficient, the stores perfect, the methods adopted to detect bad workmanship or material were excellent. Here it was possible to see women and men working side by side together. While going round these factories we were informed that the day before the election of representatives to the Moscow Soviet had taken place. I enquired if it was true that only communists could be elected and that terrorism was used to prevent the free exercise of the vote. No one I asked had ever seen any terrorism and everyone assured me that irrespective of opinion any person qualified to vote might be elected. The vote is open, not by ballot. I should feel an objection to this if it were possible as in England to elect members of the master class, or if the same deadly corrupting influence of direct and indirect bribery were possible. In these factories, some of the leading organisers are men who belonged to the capitalist class before the revolution. I consider much of the efficiency of organisation is due to the very exceptional loyality of such men, one of whom we were able to have some discussion with. I found him most enthusiastic about his work. He was not very clear what the end of the

present regime would be, but he was confident that Russia would pull through and ultimately lead the world.

Two or three big and little workshops do not prove that industry in Russia is being carried on as it should be. All the same these workshops do demonstrate that even in the midst of war and civil war, the business of organising industry has been carried on and in some industries actually set going afresh. I am certain that given a great social upheaval in this country and a blockade of our ports by an enemy fleet, we should very soon find ourselves in a worse plight than our friends in Russia.

Later on while in Moscow I was able to get into touch with the textile industry through an interview with Comrade Nogin who is the President of the Central Organisation of Textile Factories. Nogin, like all the others who are organising the life of Russia, has spent much of his time in prison and abroad. He lived for a time near Manchester and acquired first hand knowledge of the textile industry. Much of the time spent with him was used by him interviewing me. He was very anxious to know all about wages, conditions and the supply of raw material, especially flax in Ireland and England. I told him all I knew which was not very much and he was very much interested in the gam-

bling with shares in Lancashire and thought that the workers would very soon discover that the inflation caused by this buying and selling of mills would inevitably be to the disadvantage of the people generally.

Like every other industry the textile business is heavily handicapped because of the war. The importation of cotton from Turkestan and elsewhere has stopped and as is the case with many other industries, new sources of supply and new methods have been adopted. Russia produces lots of flax. Her chemists have discovered two processes by which cotton goods are produced from flax. I saw stacks of such goods in a huge "Soviet Store." I am not expert enough to explain the process, but the effect is to turn half the flax into cotton. Without this discovery the Russian people would have gone very short of clothes.

Only first class goods are manufactured. There is no grading as apparently one rule has been adopted: the best is good enough for the workers. In order to utilise to the fullest extent the flax that is produced, peasants are now being taught to secure a greater return from their produce. Much waste has taken place in the past and no doubt much is still taking place. If the advice of Nogin and his colleagues is taken it is estimated that an extra 40 million poods of flax will be available for use without a single pood increase in

production. It is all a question of using everything and wasting nothing.

Some peasants object to the new instructions and regulations; though each season it is expected the opposition will grow less. In the factories production is hindered because of shortage of food and raw material. Some are closed down entirely, others have been re-modelled, some textile factories have been turned to other uses. Many have been entirely re-modelled, especially those belonging to the old nobility which were badly organised and equipped with antiquated machinery. I was shown charts which demonstrated that greater production was entirely dependent on good organisation, and, chief of all, on a plentiful supply of food and other necessaries for the life of the workers. Once our blockade is really moved and transport facilities are available, all the factories will be working full time. Meantime everything is being done to save labour. I find an opinion abroad that in Russia the one thing people are obliged to do is work, and lots of it; that everybody must work is true, but the efforts of all in authority are directed to the one purpose of saving labour. There is no sort of theory or practice that the one object in life is work. The guiding principle is "We work to live not live to work." I shall expect to see Russia taking the lead in producing and using labour-

saving appliances; especially will this be the case in respect to factories. The offices of this textile organisation are worth a word: they are situated just outside what is called China-town—a part of Moscow outside the real Kremlin but yet surrounded by a wall. These offices contain all the Central Staff which deals with everything connected with textile factories, which has to do with the provision of raw material, machinery, etc., and the distribution of the finished products. All weaving factories are grouped for purposes of administration: 80 per cent. are under Central Management and 20 per cent. under local Soviets or Councils. Spinning factories are dealt with in a similar manner. In every case the workpeople through the Trade Unions participate in management and control—i.e., every factory elects two representatives to serve with the expert appointed by the Central. Often we are told Socialism or Communism will lead to a great increase in officials and bureaucracy. Nogin proudly points out that before the revolution about 2,500 offices were devoted to the Textile business employing 15,000 clerks, managers and other officials. Now the whole business is carried on in one building, and employs only 4,000 persons to do the clerical work. I had the chance of seeing and hearing of other work of a similar character, especially in connection with the

water works near Moscow. At these works there was very great danger that the whole water supply would stop owing to shortage of fuel. This, not because fuel was not available, but solely through shortage of labour and means of transportation. The workers themselves thought of a way out: they secured the material for a light railway and within a very short time laid the lines and are now able to transport all the peat and wood they need.

Looking back, it seems to me certain that given peace and freedom of trade, our Russian friends will succeed in building up a Socialist industry. There will be rigid discipline, but as I conceive it, no hardship. No one, outside Bedlam, has ever thought that modern industry can be organised and kept going by each workman being free to work in his own sweet way: like a football team we have understood that each person has a place to fill and must fill such place to the very best of his power. But mass production, production for use, the elimination of all waste, the clearing away of all competition and the substitution of emulation and co-operation must in a country like Russia result in abundance for all. Russia can only show us the way though, if she is allowed freedom to work out her own salvation, and the one service British Labour is able to render her is to see

that the Allied Governments cease from striving to injure and hinder her in her struggle towards Communism.

# CHAPTER VI

## CHILDREN AND EDUCATION

THERE is one outstanding thought in connection with my short stay in Russia which never leaves me, and that is the conditions under which I found children living. I saw them at railway stations on the long journey to and from Petrograd to Moscow, in small villages on a drive 40 versts out of Moscow, and in the streets of the two capital cities; and nowhere in Russia at any time did I see children who in appearance or physique could match the terrible specimens of child life I saw in Cologne in February, 1919. That children in Russia suffer hardships and privation from cold, hunger and disease is only too true. Typhus, cholera, smallpox are epidemic diseases which carry off old and young indiscriminately in Petrograd and Moscow. The Soviet Councils have put forth every effort to save the children: nowhere else in the world

in times of disorder or days of peace has any Government endeavoured to do more. I have met scores of critics who condemn the Soviet regime root and branch, but, when pressed, even the most bitter critic is obliged to confess that within the narrow limits of their means, and these are miserably small owing to our infamous blockade and the subsidised wars, the Bolsheviks, led by Lunacharsky the Minister for Education, have done everything possible to preserve the life of the children, both mentally and physically.

It is the joyous gift of play these Russian children possess which from start to finish when meeting them captured my imagination. Whether looking at the weirdly dressed crowd of boys and girls which thronged round me on my arrival at Moscow in a vain endeavour to carry my bags, or standing, as occasionally I did, outside St. Saviour's Cathedral watching crowds of laughing, shouting children of all ages skating, tobogganning or sliding, it was always the same. Want and suffering had not, could not quench their spirits or damp their ardour in striving to get joy out of life. Even the elder children who, on occasion, would be seen assisting the adults in snow-clearing, appeared to look on the task as something out of which amusement should be obtained.

In East London I have often seen children

gather round foreign sailors, Chinese and others, and get amusement from their strange appearance: on at least two occasions I received a similar kind of attention from children in Moscow. Although dressed in a very long fur coat with a Russian cap, the children understood I was a stranger and so made of me a sort of post around which they slid, skated and tobogganed, chattering, laughing all the time, and, as I imagined, challenging me to talk. Every day during my stay the river Moskva was frozen over and thus became a playground covered at certain times and places with children, who appeared not merely capable of enjoyment, but easily able to enjoy themselves.

Under other and less favourable conditions, it was possible to see how children lived. At mid-day every day children by the hundred could be seen going to food centres and bread stores, waiting in long queues, sometimes for hours on end in bitterly cold weather: others were to be found in public restaurants getting their mid-day meals. Very few restaurants or food stores were as efficiently equipped or anything like as clean as in this country, and the long wait was a wearisome business.

In none of the children did I see a sign of depression or lack of mental or physical vigour. The most favourable conditions for seeing children were in the great theatres and

concert halls, especially on Sundays, when it would appear as if all the musical and dramatic talent of Russia was enlisted for the purpose of giving entertainment and pleasure to the children. Nowhere else in the world is more done for children, no other children in the world enjoy dancing and singing more than these young Russians, it seems to be in their blood: very soon they get to know the names of dancers, singers and actors, and applaud and cheer them with as much zest and vigour as older people.

It would be a mistake to think that theatres are used only for amusement: they are also used for educational purposes. So far, cinemas are not much used owing to shortage of materials. There are great difficulties to be overcome before the "movies" are used as in other countries. When these difficulties are removed by the establishment of trade relationships with the outside world, the moving picture will be utilised to the very fullest extent for amusement and education. The story of humanity will be told in pictures, and heroic deeds recorded. There will, however, be no glorification of bloodshed and violence; no appeal to race or religious bigotry and hatred: the cinema will be used to teach citizenship and love of humanity.

There are crèches, boarding schools, villages and townships all devoted to children:

the feeble-minded, mentally deficient, are for the first time in Russia being properly and humanely cared for. I like to remember in connection with work amongst children that many women who have little or no sympathy with Socialism of any kind, feel compelled to give their services on behalf of education and care for the future generation. It is women of this sort who have materially helped to organise the "children's town" which has been set up at "Tsarkoe Selo" near Petrograd—a place that was formerly used as the Czar's town or village. It is a wonderful place where everything is done to bring brightness and knowledge into the lives of children.

The Bolshevik leaders are deadly enemies of ignorance: they know their greatest foes are to be found amongst those millions of ignorant illiterates, left as an heritage by the Czardom: therefore they organise to spread knowledge, especially among children. The work, however, of every school and college is heavily handicapped through lack of school materials, pencils, paper, reading and other books. But in spite of this deficiency, many teachers continue to work hard and persevere. Unhappily some teachers are not willing to help: many sabotage the new schemes; some are hopeless reactionaries; others are quite ignorant of the first elements of education. Before the revolution the number of teachers

and their capacity was extremely limited: great efforts are being made to supply this deficiency; training centres are being established.

Most residential schools in Moscow are very small. I should think forty was about the outside number in many of them. I yield to nobody in my knowledge of English schools: I have seen all sorts of public and private schools—Mill Hill, Eton, Shrewsbury, and scores of Poor Law schools, besides hundreds of ordinary day schools. Consequently when visiting these schools in Moscow I could not be other than surprised how small they were and how limited in every way compared with our Poor Law schools. They looked and were, very mean, and in this they would have rejoiced the heart of the middle and upper class ratepayers in this country, who are always complaining that too much money is spent on the children of the poor. Yet the buildings, for size, light and air did remind me a little of the houses at Eton where the upper class boys live, but only because there seemed less cubic space than the numbers warranted.

For all this no intelligent observer who looked either at children or homes could but be agreeably astonished that so much has been attempted and so much done; and no one seeing the general attitude of the children

towards the teachers and the teachers towards the children could fail to realise that much, very much of the work was a labour of love. The children were proud to sing, recite and dance and the teachers proud of their pupils. In all schools we were greeted with what is now the "National Anthem"—"The International." Sometimes it was pathetic to look at these little ones straining their childish voices trying to impress us with the words,

> "Then, comrades, come rally,
> The last fight let us face,
> The Internationale
> Unites the human race."

Whatever else may be slurred over, I am sure the meaning of these words is quite thoroughly explained and understood by the children who sing them.

At one school which I visited in company with several other Press representatives, we were entertained by singing, dancing and reciting. Amongst other things sung were some nursery rhymes and folk songs with dances. Although none of us understood the language we soon caught the tunes and now and then a word. Being as much a child as any of them I suddenly thought I would like to join in a game which consisted of dancing round

in a ring—very similar to our children's game of "Poor Jenny is a-weeping," but in the Russian game one child calls out another and they dance together in the centre of the ring. Of course I got taken out and took out others, and then thought "Hang the language, I will teach them 'Ring a ring of Roses' and 'This is the way we go to school,'" and very soon with the aid of an interpreter we were singing children's songs as in England. We were a merry party and as one of my friends as old as myself said "'Language is no bar where children are concerned." When we left they all crowded to the windows waving hands and shouting goodbye.

I should like to say another word for the splendid women who conduct these schools. Like so much else in Russia it is a case of making bricks without straw. In many places the sanitary arrangements have entirely broken down because of shortage of fuel; in others there can be no proper school owing to the same cause; and everywhere there is lack of every kind of necessary equipment. Great efforts are made to inculcate cleanliness and the value of each child's body, but alas, there is very little soap; tooth brushes, combs and hairbrushes are also very scarce, but the teeth are considered of primary importance and much trouble is bestowed upon them. I have no doubt an English Local Government

Board Inspector or other expert going round would easily condemn the whole system root and branch, but I found myself wondering, if starting from nothing, in the midst of civil war, a blockade, and foreign wars, my countrymen and women would have done so well. In any case I am just lost in admiration at what I have seen accomplished by these men and women, many of them without any previous training for the work they are now doing so well.

There is much discussion as to the wisdom or otherwise of co-education. I am a prejudiced observer as I have always advocated this system. I did not see anything in the relationships of these boys and girls different from what I have seen elsewhere, except that neither children or grown-ups on the Continent are as prudish and self-conscious as we are about natural functions and sex matters generally. In any case, I saw no sign or gesture of which I could complain; but I did see a freedom from restraint, a natural sort of relationship amongst the boys and girls that seemed to show they were being trained to respect themselves and to be respectful to others.

On three occasions I had a meal with the teachers and nurses in these boarding schools, and at every school I visited was able to see the food supplied to the children. At each

dinner there was always poultry or meat: the evidence of friend and opponent and of my own eyes is quite conclusive that what there is of good nourishing food is first shared amongst children, next amongst invalids, the general public coming last, and with the great shortage this is a very bad last indeed. I never saw milk or poultry served at a meal anywhere in Russia but at these schools, except when a small quantity was served at our own evening meal. Visits to these schools were planned overnight by Barry or myself.

In order that mothers may go to work crèches have been established all over the towns and in some villages. These are run on model lines and also mainly by women who formerly belonged to the middle and upper classes. I think these are among the best nurseries I have seen anywhere, they are not overcrowded and are light and airy. If lung power is a sign of health, then these babies are extremely vigorous. Great care is taken to prevent infection. The matron asked me and my friends to put on overalls before entering a ward.

One special thing in connection with all this work for children is the fact that there are no distinctions of class or nationality. Every child in Russia is looked upon as a child of the community. To obtain its right to sit down at the table provided by the Russian

people a child must not prove itself legitimate or illegitimate: neither is a child penalised because of the sins or virtues of its parents. At the same time parents are not allowed to shirk responsibility, but exactly contrary to what happens under the L.C.C. and other education authorities in this country, children are first of all cared for and the responsibility of either men or women for the child is settled afterwards. It was a real pleasure to find that the principle of "care for the children" had been adopted as a public policy.

One day, in company with some friends, I interviewed Comrade Lunacharsky, the Minister of Education. He lives with his wife and family in rooms in one of the huge buildings in the Kremlin. Like all other ministers, I found him in a huge, rather cold office, very busy, surrounded by officials and children. He not only has to care for and organise education for children, but has also to administer the whole business of educating the army, navy and adult civil population. In addition he has charge of all public buildings and monuments, and is on the committee which is charged with the maintenance of churches and other historic buildings. He would be classed as an agnostic, yet he has a true reverence for all ancient and religious buildings. I heard him deliver a splendid address to public officials at a meeting called to celebrate the triumphs of the "Red"

Army: his one plea was for public service as the aim and object of life.

When we saw him in his office, he had only just recovered from a short illness: in spite of this he was all eagerness to tell of his schemes for better education. He was a little cynical and bitter about England and our ruthless blockade; sad and angry at the effects of this action of our Government in preventing the children of Russia getting their chance: but all the time he expressed his confident hope that the difficulties of to-day would be overcome. He explained at length the condition of the country when he took over the work of education. We heard from him disgraceful stories of how teachers who had served under the old regime refused to work when the Soviet Government was established and deliberately set to work to hinder the spread of education. He seemed convinced that education would only really start when the young people now being trained were ready to enter the schools.

Kindergarten schools are not schools as we know them and up to eight years of age the word education is not used: after that age the boys and girls go to schools for varying degrees of training up to the age of sixteen when the choice is made whether to go on to university or to industrial training. This is decided not by ordinary examination, but by talks between

teachers and the scholar concerned so that boys and girls may learn all there is to know of the profession they hope to follow. There are no schools in Russia for separate castes or classes; neither are there class colleges, but, like the common sense people they are, those responsible for education do not attempt to force all children through one machine made sort of education; neither do they judge capacity merely by examination papers, or the work of teachers by the number of children that pass a particular examination.

One thing is taught almost hourly: that is the honourable character of all useful work. There is no teaching of the doctrine of "get on," no putting before the child as a worthy object of life the ambition to become rich and powerful or even to enter public life in order to get personal power. All education is designed for the purpose of making the child understand that labour of every sort that is useful is honourable: Literature and Art, History and Science are all taught with the one object of making people useful. Ordinary work in factory and workshop is taught by allowing older boys and girls to go to these places as part of their school time. Girls are sent to hospitals and other public institutions to learn how to cook, wash and clean up. Education is not separated from work or work from education, the object being to show that

one is dependent on the other. I repeat the one outstanding lesson taught all children is the fact that labour of all kinds for the service of the nation is honourable and lives lived dependent on the labour of others are dishonourable.

Economics are taught in an elementary manner: history is taught as something which concerns humanity and not as a matter of primary importance only to one's own nation. Consequently internationalism is the keynote, and in order to emphasise this the children are taught by experience that in their schools and in their relationships with each other, no matter to what class or race or creed their parents may have belonged, they, as children born in a socialist state, have no rights, no privileges, except those which are shared by all.

As children grow up the question of advanced education arises. This is very much hindered owing to lack of teachers. When peace is signed there will be a great opening for teachers from other countries, especially for those capable to take part in what is called higher education. There are evening classes going on now in every industrial centre in the big towns; new colleges are being established, but all lack teachers and professors. In order to cope with the great shortage of capable and efficient administrators, schools for training

these have been established and thousands of young people are being trained in order to become local government servants, teachers, diplomats, etc.

Lunacharsky tells with great pride that his department for education spends more money per head than any other Government in the world: that since the revolution they have established 62,288 first grade schools, and 3,780 other schools in thirty departments; in addition 5,800,000 primers and 2,000,000 books for teaching have been distributed; 2,458,000 children have received clothes, and 9,450,000 pairs of boots have been given away. The schemes for the future training and care of children are very ambitious. If the Bolsheviks retain power all Russians will know all there is to be known about Russia, as the years of training will be spent in different parts of the country. Not only will they get knowledge of their own country, they will also travel abroad. Ships are to be chartered and parties of three hundred children at a time will visit the world. People may ask who is to pay: it is proposed to use the natural resources of Russia for this and all national purposes. But in addition the Government of Russia will be the cheapest in the world: there will be no gilt or ginger bread courts and puppets, no imperialist armies and navies. The whole material wealth of this great people

will be spent on the service of all men, all women and all children; there will be plenty to spare for all.

But great as his achievements are amongst children, Lunacharsky has also done splendid work amongst adults in addition to evening classes and extension lectures. A regular campaign has been carried on in army and navy. It is ignorant folly for critics of the labour armies in Russia to write and speak of these as uneducated dupes of Trotsky. Nothing is wider from the truth: from being the most ignorant army in the world the Russian army is rapidly becoming the most intelligent and best educated. The defeat of Koltchak and Denikin, the marvellous fortitude and patience, heroism and effort shown by the Red armies is due in a large measure to the fact that they knew what they were fighting for. Before the Bolsheviks gained power only 15 per cent. of the army could read; now over 65 per cent. are able to read and reason. Every day newspapers are distributed; every day classes are held; and every day small sectional meetings take place at which discussions are started for the purpose of spreading information. There never can be an imperialistic Russia while this sort of thing continues, because these soldiers are told the bare simple truth about politics. It is this which will make the labour armies successful: the men

now regimented for labour are not dumb driven cattle: they are intelligent human beings accepting all that is involved in an army of labour in order to accomplish certain well defined ends.

I have not dealt with the religious education here as I do so in another chapter. I can only say here that in a society where opinion on official religion is as it is in Russia, there can be no official religion. All that those of us who care for religion are entitled to ask is that religion shall have its chance.

The priests and ministers who desire to teach ethics should be allowed to do so freely and without hindrance of any kind: but as I see this matter in connection with children I must put on record my belief that Lunacharsky and his colleagues are living up to the gospel conveyed in the words, "Suffer the little children to come unto me," for they are giving to every child full opportunity to develop the highest and best. Unlike the British and German system, education is a means not for personal ambition and aggrandisement but for social service and if it is true we "worship God by doing good, that deeds not words are understood," then these Bolsheviks, feared and hated because they are feared, are the true Christians of to-day, for they hold aloft the beacon light of truth, that each child's life is of equal value and that each

boy and girl born in the world has an equal right to share in all that the great world of humanity has to give.

# CHAPTER VII

## LAW AND ORDER

THE Russian revolution in its inception was the least terrorist in its methods of all modern upheavals; in fact, it was a triumph for pacifism. This triumph was gained owing to the fact that common soldiers refused to kill common work people; that Cossacks refused any longer to treat Russian citizens of Petrograd or Moscow as of different flesh and blood from themselves, but instead fraternised with them and joined in overturning autocracy.

Not only was this so in regard to relationships between ordinary men in and out of uniform, but all at once, throughout the length and breadth of Russia a new thought prevailed. Officials, however highly placed, however gaudily decorated, were no longer sacrosanct—no longer to be considered as persons whose word was law. Consequently when these officials endeavoured to urge workers in uniform to fire on their own flesh

and blood, they were informed that if any shooting was to be done it would be against the officers. Anarchial as this doctrine sounds in the ears of those in authority, ultimately it is the one and only law of life which will save mankind.

It is authority, man made, man supported, or rather accepted and tolerated, which holds the world in chains. There will be no more wars, no more bloody revolutions, once the workers in all countries absolutely refuse under any conditions to kill one another. I am certain that, apart from all other economic questions, apart from all questions of terrorism or anything else, the one and only thing which has rallied the Churchills, Clemenceaus and other supporters of capitalism against Soviet Russia, is this fact, that once the workers of the world can be made to understand that, by complete unity of action, and refusal to obey the order to shoot, they can emancipate themselves, the whole business of capitalist society is at an end and the social revolution will be an accomplished fact.

That day is not yet. In Russia, as everywhere else, it was and is an active virile self-confident minority which for the past two and a half years has carried on the revolution. All the time, they have been beset by hosts of internal and external foes. Lenin and his friends were no sooner settled in power than

all the underground forces of espionage, corruption and conspiracy were let loose by the capitalist governments of all countries. Sad to say, either directly or indirectly, British, American and French citizens have been most guilty in this nefarious business. If ever peace is made and publication of documents is allowed, the Russian people will be in a position to indict through their agents the Governments of Europe and America, with almost every crime in the decalogue. Lying, thieving, false swearing, vice of every description, coupled with murder, of all these crimes some of these agents have been guilty, and all for one purpose—the overthrow of the Soviet System. I repeat these facts here because it is necessary to bear them in mind when trying to form a judgment as to the wisdom or rightness of the establishment of the "Extraordinary Commission."

Now, in all I have said, I must not be taken as arguing in defence of Defence of the Realm regulations in England or elsewhere, but I do maintain that conditions may justify even a Socialist revolutionary Government in using means it despises to safeguard itself and the revolution entrusted to its care. Born, as it were, in the midst of a terrible crisis, the commission for tracking down crime has gained an unenviable notoriety, and its doings have been lied about in the most flagrant manner,

One small case is typical of many others: again and again the world has been told that a celebrated anarchist, "Peter the Painter," who was wanted in England for alleged burglary and murder, was head of this Extraordinary Commission. This statement was intended to prove that the lives and liberties of law-abiding citizens were controlled by a criminal. I was informed by an anti-Bolshevik woman, well known in this country, who had been arrested by order of the Commission, that this story was too ridiculous to reply to, as everybody in Russia acquainted with affairs knew that although a man named Peters was one of the chief officials on the Extraordinary Commission, he was not an anarchist and was not the man said to be wanted in England. I give this friend's authority because it adds the weight of independent and rather hostile testimony to that of the Government itself.

The present head of the Extraordinary Commission is Djerzinsky. I visited his headquarters in company with some other friends. He appeared to me to be as mild a mannered man as any of the Chief Police Officials in this country; in fact the men I have met who are at the head either of the police or killing business always appear to be amongst the most urbane and courteous I meet in any walk of life. And Djerzinsky is no exception to the

rule. He was very willing to answer questions and willing to produce documents. He is about middle height with rather a military appearance, and dressed in uniform. There was nothing swagger about him, and without his uniform he would have appeared as most officers appear when in mufti—just an ordinary person.

When, later on, I met others of the Commission and saw them more or less in a group, I wondered how the sort of legend which has grown up around them was possible; and then I tried to think of Lord French in Ireland, General Dyer at Amritzar, and our own Sir Basil Thomson here in London. Quite as horrible things can be said of these three from the point of view of violence in putting down civil trouble, and the work of espionage and spying generally.

I first of all tried to discover how the Commission got appointed. It is appointed by the Supreme Council and consists of fifteen members. A presiding board of four sits in Moscow and Committees sit in other towns. A Committee may decide matters if there is full agreement amongst them, but in the event of disagreement the whole Commission of fifteen must be called together to decide the matter under dispute. Its work is manifold. At first its exclusive business was to deal with counter revolutionaries, and without a doubt

many thousands of people were imprisoned merely on suspicion, amongst them Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries, Cadets, Czarists and foreigners. The duty of the Commission was to track down persons likely to be centres of disaffection or to be thrown into the net of the disaffected. It was a difficult business, because many people, especially some of those belonging to other Socialist and Anarchist groups, at times professed loyally to join the Bolsheviks, only later on to be discovered plotting for the overthrow of the Government. Supporters of the old regime, clerics connected with the Church, and people with no fixed opinions, and many aliens, also joined in as loyal to the new order, to be found later on as agents provocateurs for conspiracies.

There was also a great deal of work to do in the army, where the Czarist officers, joining up very often as privates, made themselves the centres for promoting desertion and betrayal in the face of the enemy. Sometimes batches of "Red" troops have surrendered to Denikin, or in the North to our own officers, being led to do so by Czarists who had professed to become Bolsheviks.

In these circumstances, in the early days of the revolution, there was the "Terror," which resulted, according to statistics, in the execution of about 8,000 persons. It is claimed for

the Commission, and thus for the Soviet Government, that not one of these were executed without some form of trial; that it is untrue to say that at any time there had been indiscriminate killing or torture. On this latter point, the authorities are very emphatic, and here I am only giving their statement. I had hoped to bring back a complete set of figures, but these were not available when I left. The materials for getting them together are in the office of the Commission and will be published later on.

But it is a mistake to think that these fifteen men were brought into existence merely to hunt down counter revolutionaries. They had a great work to do in dealing with illegal trading, bribery and corruption generally. No one will deny that under the Czarist regime bribery and corruption amongst the official classes was not merely prevalent but was accepted as the ordinary every day condition of life. All at once to break with this condition of things would seem to be impossible, and the Soviet Government has had the very greatest difficulty in putting it down. They believe, however, that through the work of the Commission this is being done.

As to illegal trading, I have dealt with it elsewhere. Neither the Government nor the Commission hopes to succeed in thoroughly putting an end to this until food is more plenti-

ful and the general conditions of life more tolerable.

But there was another method of bribery by which opponents hoped to break the spirit and power of the Government, and that was by undermining the morale of the soldiers by means of money bribes, and it is here where Allied gold came in and where it was spent so very plentifully. Of course this sort of thing is very difficult to track down and takes a very large number of men and women in order to do it thoroughly.

Then there was the industrial side of life. Until peace is signed and there is a general amnesty and the story is written as a matter of history, no one will be able to tell completely of the ramifications of the Allied conspiracy which time after time almost brought the munition works at Tula and Putiloff to a standstill. Long ago, many of the leading agents of the Allies recognised that the Soviet Government would not be pulled down by fighting, and so they set to work in the industrial centres to create unrest and dissatisfaction owing to the shortage of food. These agents were able to corrupt other agents, who in turn went into the factories and spread their poison, declaring that with peace there would come plenty, and that the responsibility for war and shortage lay with the Soviet Government.

But in addition to all this work, for the first two years the Commission had an even more difficult task on its hands, and that was the business of restoring law and order throughout the country. I sometimes read what people have to say about Russia, and listen to speeches on the same subject. What always strikes me is how few people realise that with the Baltic Provinces cut off Russia is still a country of thousands of miles in extent of territory and with a population of over 100 millions. When the Czarist regime, with all its police and military and its centuries old domination, was broken up, lawlessness broke out everywhere. Some bands of men roamed the country, pillaged when they could, lodged where they chose, executed vengeance, and by means of terrorism extracted the means of life from those unwilling to give it. To stop the doings of these brigands and bring the country back to some sort of order was also the work of the Extraordinary Commission, and life throughout Russia is more safe because of its work.

To-day a greater task has been entrusted to it, and that is to assist in restoring health, clearing away disease, and to teach the people that it is a duty they owe each other to take the necessary means for preserving health.

Finally, no one imagines for a moment that the Extraordinary Commission was the final word the Bolsheviks have to say on the

methods by which they desire to maintain proper relationships between the various members of the community. In the future it is proposed that the new People's Courts of Justice shall be the dominant factor in the preservation of law and order. When peace is restored, the Secret Police will be abolished —although the Secret Police in Russia are probably the most numerous and well organised in any country of Europe. At the same time it is necessary to say that this latter will depend on the attitude of Foreign Governments towards the Soviet. If Russia is left alone to work out her own life, then the Secret Police will not be needed, but if, as seems probable, the Allies intend to continue their work of stirring up hatred and strife, the Secret Police will have to remain.

For internal disputes, the People's Courts of Justice will have the biggest voice. Before the revolution to go to a Law Court on any sort of business was a very expensive matter. Now there is one uniform public Law Court, for civil and criminal cases. Each district is provided with its own district Law Court. All matters relating to crime, offences, disputes, personal rights, are subject to the jurisdiction of the district court. The only cases that are not allowed before these courts are cases connected with counter revolution, sabotage, etc.

It is worthy of notice that most of the cases

now are criminal cases. Formerly, of course, the civil courts were kept going for the purpose of settling questions connected with property. In spite of the loosening of all social ties, there are less people brought before the courts to-day than ever before on account of offences of this character.

The person set to act as magistrate or judge over his fellows is elected. The permanent judges are elected by the Soviets and are elected from persons who have theoretical and practical knowledge of the law. But they must also have some experience of working class organisation. Permanent judges are elected for indefinite periods and are always liable to be recalled by the Soviet by which they are elected. Judges are also assisted by assessors and these are chosen from persons who possess elective rights. The lists of these are made up by workers' organisations, such as village and rural Soviets, and are subject to the Revision of the Executive Committee of the Soviets. Lists are made for a period of six months, and each assessor takes part in six sessions without the right to resign his responsibility. While acting as an assessor, he is paid the local rate of wages, or such remuneration that may be equal to the maximum rate of living expenses for the locality in which he acts.

It may be taken as a rule that prisoners have a better chance before these Courts than they

formerly had before the courts under the Czar. It is worthy of notice that for crimes against property compulsory labour is nearly always imposed; for all other offences fines predominate, except in the case of murder, where of course a fine is never imposed. There have been, I am told, a few cases where persons found guilty of murder have only been doomed to loss of freedom and to compulsory labour.

For those who have been found guilty of manufacturing and selling intoxicating drinks, eighty per cent. are fined and eighteen per cent. imprisoned. The death penalty for any person either in the army or in civil life has been abolished, and this I understand is being rigidly adhered to.

As to general maintenance of order, what struck me was the absence of any paraded authority anywhere. I am well aware that authority was present, probably in every big road, but it did not obtrude itself. One had to look to discover the man or the woman who was exercising the duty of policeman. In Petrograd I saw the women police paraded, and very smart indeed they looked in their uniform. In Moscow the work is mainly done by what appear to be ex-soldiers, but I should think it was the easiest thing possible to preserve order in either of the big cities.

# CHAPTER VIII

## PRISONERS AND CAPTIVES

BEFORE this book is published, something like 1,000 British people and their dependents will have returned from Russia. About 120 of these will be British soldiers, sixty of whom were confined in a monastery or prison in Moscow. Speaking relatively, only a few of the others have endured internment, either in camp or prison. I believe a few prisoners still remain in Russia and are likely to remain there until Peace is signed.

If the Government agrees to carry out the requests put forward by the jingo press of this country and publishes stories of outrages and brutalities told by the refugees who have just returned, I think we all should demand that with these stories shall be printed a complete statement, showing how many British people and their dependents have resided in Russia during the period of the revolution,

how many of these have been imprisoned or interned, for what periods and for what offences, and how many British have been executed; together with a statement showing how many have died of disease, the nature of the disease, and the age of the deceased person.

There is nothing like facts to blow away the fairy tales of fiction mongers. No one with any knowledge of facts will deny that many British subjects endured untold hardship and suffering; some of it partially due to the treatment they received at the hands of the Soviet Government or its agents. No one will deny that some British people have been interned and imprisoned without trial and for offences which, to say the least, were charged against them only on suspicion. But when all this is admitted, the bare fact remains that the bulk of British residents were free to live where they pleased; could obtain employment and earn their livings on the same terms as Russians; that at least sixty of the British soldiers were never treated as prisoners, but were allowed complete freedom of movement; that even those who were imprisoned or interned were allowed to receive parcels of food from the outside; and at holiday times, such as Christmas, were allowed to amuse themselves by means of concerts.

I met the first British prisoner I saw in Russia on the streets of Moscow. When I

asked how he was getting on, he replied, "Very well indeed."

I next came into contact with a dozen of these prisoners at the Vicarage in Moscow and their condition was such that I expressed surprise at their healthy appearance. With one accord they proclaimed, what I afterwards discovered to be the fact, that their healthy appearance was due, in large measure, to the work of the British chaplain in that city, who spared neither money nor pains to secure not only for the British, but for all foreign nationals, extra food and nourishment. It must be understood that in doing this he was committing a grossly illegal act, which was winked at by the authorities, solely because he was acting for and on behalf of British prisoners.

The prisons themselves and internment camps were not prisons in the ordinary sense, that is, places originally built as prisons, so far as ordinary alien prisoners were concerned. The British officers and the so-called volunteers, who served with them, were housed in what had formerly been a monastery. No doubt the sanitary arrangements were very bad, but so, unhappily, were the sanitary arrangements everywhere. You cannot have frost to the extent they have it in Moscow during the months of February and March, coupled with an almost entire absence of fuel,

without pipes of every sort and kind getting choked and frozen up.

It will be said that I am smoothing over the very great shortage of food. I have no intention of doing anything of the kind. I have said over and over again that in Russia everybody was hungry, and prisoners were hungry as well as everybody else. The only difference between the prisoners and the rest of the population was that the former were, in fact, better fed. First, because the British chaplain, Mr. North, borrowed money right and left, and with this bought food wherever he could lay hands on it, and secondly because during the last few weeks the British Government was allowed to send in food for the special use, not only of the prisoners but of the British residents generally.

I spent one evening in the so-called prison of the sixty "prisoners" who were free. I found them complete masters of their surroundings. They were in excellent spirits, ready to quarrel with me on every point of detail and principle concerning Bolshevism. I was much amused with them, because of their actual condition and the condition under which their friends in England thought they were living.

One boy, complaining of his food, declared that often they did not get all the bread they were entitled to, but was immediately corrected by another who said, "Yes. But when

we don't get bread, we get flour." I asked if they wanted me to be sorry for them because they were obliged to cook their food, seeing they had nothing to do all day, but to keep themselves and their so-called prison clean, and amuse themselves, and were occasionally called upon to make bread. The night I happened to go I saw their week's ration of meat. They said that sometimes it was reindeer meat and sometimes other meats. That which I saw looked very good, and I am quite certain that during no one of the four weeks I was in Russia did I receive anything like that ration. I also saw French and other soldier prisoners all being treated in the same manner. I have tried to find a new word for such prisons and prisoners, for certain it is these men enjoyed a better life than the Commissar in whose charge they were placed. The prisoners shared their extra food with him, thus proving his need and their sufficiency. I can only call them free prisoners.

For all this, it is not nice to be detained in a foreign land, and as most of these soldiers were very young, I can understand how sick and miserable they really were; but my real sympathy was for those in prison, the officers and men the Government stupidly refused me permission to see.

I visited one prison where the correspondent of a London newspaper was detained.

I can only describe this as a sort of able-bodied workhouse. It was clean, much cleaner than most institutions in Russia, and the officers seemed very much on a level with the officers of a casual ward or able-bodied institution in this country. But as for a prison! It was a little difficult to understand where the prison came in. In addition to seeing the particular prisoner I went to see, I saw lots of others, and what astonished me most of all was the sort of freedom of conversation and the attitude of the prisoners towards their jailors. The Governor was a young man—I should think about thirty-six years of age. He could not speak English, but was a very well educated man, indeed, much better educated than the average workhouse master I have met in this country, and certainly superior to the old gentleman who had charge of me during the few days I was in Pentonville prison some years ago. But prisons and prisoners in Russia are not looked upon with quite the same feelings as prisoners are looked upon in more highly civilised countries. There is a kind of allowance made for the causes which bring them there, which appears to me to affect their whole treatment.

Who would have dreamed from what we have read of the brutality of these Bolsheviks that the prisoner whom I went to see would be brought to me in his own clothes, permitted

to sit side by side with me in the prison, and to talk and discuss without any interference from officers or anyone else! I was kept waiting till he came in from walking exercise, looking fresh and jolly.

We talked away for a fairly long time, and only when we wished to ask questions did anyone speak to us. The prisoner, who had been charged with entering Russia without permission, and with having bribed an official, was sentenced to detention until Peace was signed. There was no such thing as vengeance or even punishment in his treatment. He was allowed to study three different languages. Had he chosen he would have been engaged as an English tutor to teach English, which most of the people in authority desire to learn. By giving his parole not to attempt to escape he would have been allowed freedom to go where he pleased in the prison.

I contrasted this treatment with the treatment dealt out to political and other prisoners in this country, and especially with the treatment given to suffragettes and Irish prisoners, to the C.O.'s and the aliens charged or suspected of offences during the war, and the many thousands of aliens interned for no offence at all except that accidentally they were born outside England. In the midst of the Suffrage agitation one of my boys was sent to prison for breaking a window — a very

heinous offence no doubt and one requiring very severe punishment. During his term of imprisonment, his wife, mother and myself and his baby visited him. He was barricaded off, as if either he or we would do some harm. We were allowed to talk only in the presence of a warder, and on saying goodbye he was not allowed even to touch his baby.

I shall be told that these are the rules of our prisons. So they are, but no such rules prevail—certainly for political offenders—in Bolshevik Russia, not even when these political offenders belong to the country which has done its worst to crush the Soviet Republic.

There is another side to the prison question also, to which all of us should give some attention. The Bolsheviks do not think that it is possible to cure the evils of civilised life by punishment. The big thing they have done by allowing illicit trading and marketing to be carried on, is worthy of a great deal of attention from us all, because it is the keynote to their whole policy. They believe that human beings are bad or good because of their surroundings. They believe that greed and avarice, thieving and lying are just a part of that system of life which depresses and represses the natural desires of mankind. They think it is quite right that people should wish to have the best obtainable in the world; that men and women should desire to get the fullest

life that is possible, and they believe that much of the crime with which all modern societies are surrounded is to a large extent due to the fact that in modern society as at present arranged, there is not enough of the best of life to go round.

Consequently their prisons, so far as they can manage it at present, are modelled on better lines than those of the old régime; not at all so good as they hope they will be in the near future, but certainly better than under the Czardom. The fortress of Peter and Paul, with its hideous dungeons below the bed of the river in Petrograd has at last gone out of business. There is now no long trail of prisoners travelling the long weary road to Siberia and its horrible mines. What prisons are now used are reformative in their character, but all are based on the principle that prisons ought to have no place in modern society, because in modern society the inducement to do the right thing should outweigh the inducement to do the wrong.

I heard many stories of ill treatment of prisoners while in prison from various quarters and none of these do I wish to belittle. I believe it is absolutely true that in some prisons aliens have been badly treated. But when all is said and done, on every occasion I tried to track this kind of thing down, to find out its truth or otherwise, the final answer I

almost invariably got was that the treatment in prisons depended very largely on the sort of chief officials in control of the prisoners. But, as I have said, meeting prisoners, talking to them, hearing their stories, I always felt they had much about which to be sorry for themselves and that nothing could get rid of the fact that they were more or less prisoners in a strange land.

On the other hand, it cannot be gainsaid that the bulk of the aliens in Russia were free to share all the same amenities of life as Russians; but when any of these aliens took part or were suspected of taking part in counter revolutionary conspirings, then the authorities put them in prison or internment camp, and in doing so only followed the example of all other European and American Governments.

It is not for us English, and certainly not for the Americans, to complain because people are put in prison without trial and only on suspicion. In both countries thousands of people have been dealt with in that way. No one can defend it, excuse it, or palliate it. But all of us can prevent ourselves from being hypocrites in denouncing it in the one case and supporting it in the other. The position of people like myself is quite clear. I should no more dream of adopting the methods which Britain adopted under D.O.R.A. than I

should fly, but then, I am not a Government. Thank goodness! It is the British Press with its hypocritical denunciations of the Bolsheviks that I have in mind at this moment. They have supported every infraction of liberty by the Government. They have hounded the Government on to "intern them all," to pass laws which make it almost impossible for many foreigners to set foot in this country, and these are the people who denounce the Bolsheviks for putting political offenders and aliens in prison.

The sixty British soldiers already mentioned could often be found in theatres and concert halls. You would find them occasionally on the streets during the day and the evening, and each carried a pass, which protected him wherever he might be found.

I do not believe there is any other Government in the world that would have treated prisoners in this way. In addition, all the prisoners I saw, whether in or out of prison, were dressed in ordinary clothes. British soldiers in khaki, and civilians in ordinary attire. When I remember the German prisoners—the huge patches with which we decorated their clothes—the anxiety with which we endeavoured to make them as ugly as possible, and the punishment meted out to any person who bestowed a little kindness upon them, I am tempted to say, that in

the matter of treating at least some prisoners, these atheist Bolsheviks carried out the Christian precept of loving their enemies.

I know I shall be told I am glossing over or trying to gloss over some of the evils and indignities which British people suffered. I am doing no such thing. They lost their property and their means of living—those of them who were rich—just as the wealthy Russians did, no more, no less. They received the same treatment as all other Russian citizens. Those of them who fell under the bann of the law did so, sometimes through their own fault, at other times through misfortune; but the outstanding fact remains that, as I have already stated, they did receive a different kind of treatment from any prisoners I know of under a similar set of conditions.

One other thing in connection with prisoners. Before leaving Copenhagen I saw a telegram which stated that smallpox, diphtheria and spotted typhus had broken out in the British prison camps. All I can say is that once more I call for figures. It is all very well for such statements to be made; all very well for people to talk at large about deaths from these diseases in prisons and prison camps. I ask in this respect for figures. How many British people suffered from these diseases; how many died and their ages. If these figures are published, we shall find that there has been

gross exaggeration, both as to the amount of the disease and the results, but the main thing I want to convey with regard to prisoners and captives is this—that in my deliberate judgment, the Bolsheviks have led the way in being more humane, more considerate in their treatment of these people than any other Government I know. Their ability to do right has been circumscribed within the limits imposed by the infamous blockade. No medicines, no anæsthetics, no means of treating diseases, have left them, of course, without the means of properly dealing with sick prisoners. The effect of this blockade which prevented medicines and anæsthetics going into Russia was seen when a British soldier was obliged to submit to an operation for removal of his eye without an anæsthetic. Hundreds of thousands of Russians obliged to undergo operations were treated in the same manner.

My claim for the Russian Government is that, within the limits of their means, and these limits were imposed from the outside by the infamous blockade and war, the Bolshevik Government has set the world an example as to the methods of dealing with prisoners.

## CHAPTER IX

### ABOUT PEOPLE

THERE is much talk about Russia being a lifeless nation; that all industry is at a standstill and that the nation is dying. This may be so: I shall here write just what I have seen of people in the streets, in railway trains, theatres, factories, churches and public places.

In Petrograd I stayed at the Astoria hotel which faces a big square in which is situated "Isaac Cathedral." I stood at the window at 7 o'clock in the morning and occasionally went backwards and forwards watching people from 7 o'clock to 9 o'clock cross this square, and the thing that kept recurring in my mind was, if there is no work being done in Petrograd, if all industry is dead, why are all these people up so early in the morning? why are some of them hurrying? in fact, why are they about at all? If the whole population is dying of disease and is worn out because of lack of food, why should people take the trouble

whilst snow is falling to leave the shelter of whatever homes they possess at this hour of the day?

Later on I was in the working class district and saw the trams literally packed with people as are the trams on the Thames Embankment morning and evening. To me it is the most extraordinary thing if all industry is at a standstill that this should be so; but not merely the observation of my eyes but other facts convinced me that although it is true capitalist enterprise and industry has stopped in Russia, national and municipal industry must have largely increased; not increased sufficiently to give people all that they need, but increased sufficiently to enable the Bolshevik Government to maintain in the field an army consisting of millions of men, to transport, feed and clothe this army in such a manner as to enable them to overthrow their enemies on every front. This tremendous fact appears to be overlooked by those who write and speak of Russia as a dead nation. It may be that this tremendous effort has left her in a very weak condition—but it is not a dead nation, not even a dying nation that has carried through the tremendous work which has been accomplished in Russia this two and a half years.

Again, a little later in the day, I was out in the streets and saw multitudes of people

going backwards and forwards, hither and thither, not in an aimless dejected manner but as if they had business to do, as if there were some purpose in their being out. It is true the closed shops give a funereal appearance to the streets, but apart from this there was nothing to show that work of some kind was not being carried on.

As in the case of the children, so in that of men and women. Again and again I stopped the friends who were with me and asked them to look at little groups of people we came across. They did not look anything like so dejected or pasty-faced as the men and women in Cologne, indeed not at all so bad as many people I have met in towns in England. This does not mean that I am asserting that everybody is well fed, that everybody has enough. But there is something in the Russian constitution that enables it to endure, a certain something which has enabled it to endure the tragedy of the past few years and still to carry itself with a certain amount of dignity and strength. A Russian once said to me, "You cannot kill the Russian people by hunger, they will live if obliged to subsist on raw corn and water only."

Travelling away down from Petrograd to Moscow, going through the trains, talking with the people, it was easy to discover how much there was to complain of and how

much there was to be sorry for in the prevailing conditions of life. In spite of everything, though, there was always a cheeriness which seemed to keep them going and which made it impossible for conditions to destroy either their vitality or their hopes.

I wish I could give an adequate picture of my railway journey out and home to see Peter Kropotkin. He lives at a little place 60 versts from Moscow. Although so short a distance it takes many hours to do the journey, partly owing to lack of fuel, but also largely owing to the fact that at each station an enormous crowd attempts to get into the trains already overcrowded. There is nothing like it in all the world that I know of.

I am told that even before the revolution trains were crammed in this sort of fashion. Picture to yourself an ordinary closed railway waggon with no seats, with doors in the centre and people obliged to climb up the best way they can and then stand for hours on end packed like sardines. This is how part of the train is made up. Other parts are made up of ordinary carriages, not exactly like ours, but very similar, except they are all "corridors" and each ordinary carriage is warmed by a wood fire. But most carriages these days are not heated at all. When a carriage gets full the steps are loaded with people, when these

are full, men women and children stand on the couplings and climb on to the roofs. Women are as daring as the men. Occasionally some clamber on to the roofs of the carriages and lie there full length; others climb up on the engine tender, and as the train moves along it looks like a great mass of moving humanity.

At one station where we stopped, another train was being marshalled in order to pass. Sitting in our carriage we were able to watch quite a little comedy going on as to who should occupy a certain step. Most of the passengers were peasants and most of them looked in good physical condition. All of them were travelling to town to do a little business, sometimes illegal business. Consequently all have parcels of one sort or another. On this occasion a woman about 30 years of age, well dressed and of good physique, a typical peasant woman, had occupied one step with two parcels and had planted herself in the centre. Her parcels were occupying the room of two other people. Again and again a man or woman would come up and remonstrate with her, demanding that she should hold her parcels or that they would hold a parcel each and stand on the step, but by the use of strong language and on one occasion by the use of her hands, she managed to keep everybody off; it certainly looked as if she were going to remain in triumphant pos-

session—a sort of one step monopolist. The hooter was sounded and off the train started: just as it got well going an old boy whom she had beaten off ten minutes earlier, darted out from a corner, jumped on to the step, took hold of the parcel, put it under his arm, and smiled benignly at the lady who we could see was giving him the length of her tongue for his pains. But he was getting to Moscow anyhow and I suppose cared little for the insults she was hurling at his head.

Our own train on this occasion was simply a sweltering mass of humanity. When we poured out on to the platform at Moscow it seemed that the crowd would never get through. We talk of crowds at cup-tie matches, but this crowd appeared to exceed them—and yet everybody went along quietly without any hurrying, for hurrying is the last thing that Russians ever will take part in.

I am not sure how people pay for travelling. I know they have to get tickets and I know too that you pass certain officials to get on to the platform, but it seemed to me that travelling was pretty easy and that a considerable number of people at the villages were engaged in travelling a good part of their time—at least it takes a good deal of time to go twenty or thirty miles.

In the theatres it is also a wonderful sight

to see the people. I am amazed when I read of how carefully I was chaperoned in Moscow and what great care was taken to see that honour was done me. One set of spell binders assert that Moscow was illuminated in my honour; another that I only visited places chosen for me. The following proves how silly and untrue such statements are. One night, as usual, without giving any previous notice, I suddenly said that I would like to go to the theatre and asked my press colleagues if they would go with me. We asked our interpreter to ring up and try and get us seats. He came back beaming: we were to have the Czar's box at the national theatre. So off we went only on arrival to discover that a couple of working class families had got there before us and we had to be content with the next box, which was, of course, just as good.

I was not much interested in the play—which was one of Strindberg's—mainly because, although I know a little of the plot I could not understand the language, and as there was enough tragedy without seeing it acted I refused to get interested. But I was intensely interested in the audience which was in the main working class: there was no mistaking it—in dress, demeanour, and everything else it was an audience of workers, and best of all their women and children were with them. They occupied the whole house from the floor

to the ceiling and showed their appreciation of the acting by calling the actors before the curtain.

In the interval we went down to the refreshment rooms and mixed with the people there; and again it was impossible for me, may be because of my ignorance, to discover the misery and dejection which we are told is universal. It was impossible for me to believe that all the people I was meeting in theatres and elsewhere were communist officials, better treated, better fed, than everybody else. If this were so, then all I can say is that the mass of the population appears to be made up of such officials.

All the theatres are alike. They are crowded each night and the repertoire is changed week by week. I saw the great Russian opera, Boris Goudonov, and was able to appreciate what I suppose is a well-known fact that the Russians are excellent judges both of good acting and good music. I only saw one performance of the ballet. It was a revelation to me in the art of dancing.

There is a sort of story that there is nothing going on in the way of intellectual life in Russia at the present time. As a matter of fact men like Gorki and Chertkoff are always lecturing. Gorki gave a lecture on Tolstoi one Sunday evening which was attended by between two and three thousand people, and

although he is not a good lecturer, that is, he speaks in a low voice and with very little animation, that great audience listened for over an hour while he delivered his lecture in a voice which it was difficult to hear in almost any part of the hall; but so intent were they that during the whole period one might have heard a pin drop. This audience was almost entirely working class.

The road which lies along the outside of the inner walls of the Kremlin, is I think, the most crowded with people in Moscow. I have crossed it at all hours of the day and night, sometimes on foot, nearly always in a vehicle, and have always found a large number of people about. On Sundays it appears to be a kind of parade, even during the severe weather which prevailed while I was there; and once more I am bound to say that I saw no sign of the terrible depression which other people appear to have seen.

One other example: on the day I visited the prison in which Mr. Keeling is interned, our car broke down through bumping into a great hole in the road. It looked as if we should be obliged to walk the remainder of the distance: the driver, Fineberg and myself did our best to shift the machine. We were surrounded by a crowd of people of all ages, and I had a good look at these. They were just the same curious crowd that would gather

round a breakdown anywhere in London, or indeed in the world. They all had a remedy, everyone gave advice to the driver, but no matter what he did the old machine would not move.

After thirty minutes or so a soldier of the Red Army came up, spoke to the driver and then turned to the crowd, and I suppose, suggested to them that a little help was worth a great deal of pity and that practical assistance was worth much more than talk. Within a few seconds at least a couple of dozen persons surrounded the car, told the driver to start his engine, and as he started, themselves gave a huge lift and sent the machine flying out of the hole. Quite a shout went up from the crowd which had assembled and there were very friendly greetings to myself from everybody.

We were at least a couple of miles from the centre, on the South side of the city, in a part I had not been to before, which is crowded with very poor people indeed. I stayed for some minutes listening to the people, and saw Fineberg exchanging conversation with them. There was no hostility, there certainly was a great amount of friendliness; and as far as I could see there was no sign of dejection or absolute starvation. That want was on their faces and that near by was much typhus is true, people were also dreading the

coming of Spring because of the sort of Spring diseases that break out. Everywhere though there was life not death.

# CHAPTER X

## PUBLIC HEALTH

BEFORE going to Russia I was warned by people I met in Scandinavia and Finland that disease of every sort and kind was raging in both Petrograd and Moscow; that it was sheer madness on my part to go into the country without previously being inoculated against half-a-dozen diseases. As it turned out I was not inoculated and am thankful to say I left Russia quite healthy, and during my month's stay was not attacked by any of the prevailing diseases.

There is no doubt at all that many thousands of people have suffered, and many thousands have died of typhus, spotted typhus and diphtheria. It is also true that many thousands more will die this spring when the thaw lets loose the accumulated mass of refuse and dirt which has been collected in frozen heaps in the backyards and other parts of the big cities. It needs to be pointed out that most of the big houses in Moscow are central heated, and thus

water-pipes and sanitary arrangements are kept going during the winter months. But the past winter has seen such an absence of fuel of every sort that the pipes in most of the big houses have been completely frozen during almost the whole of the winter —and as many of these large residences are now inhabited by three or four families where formerly there was only one, it can easily be imagined what a desperate plight people find themselves in with the sanitary arrangements out of order, and with no means of removing refuse. The consequence was that the back-yards become heaps of refuse which froze where they lay.

It was fear of the consequences of what the thaw would entail which compelled the Moscow Soviet to issue the order that every citizen should, when the thaw came, take his or her part in the removal of this accumulated rubbish.

There are tens of thousands of other houses in which there is precious little sanitary accommodation at any time. As a matter of fact, the great mass of Russians do not understand how to use sanitary conveniences: many have never seen a water closet or even earth closets, and as in many parts of France, the very crudest arrangements are considered sufficient. In Russia sanitary conveniences are even more crude than in the working class

districts of France: consequently when there is a shortage of fuel, shortage of food, coupled with the usual very low sanitary standard of life, it is only to be expected that epidemics arising from filth should be the order of the day. In addition there was very little soap to be obtained owing to the absence of fats. I am told, but I have no authority except hearsay for the statement, that Russians as a rule do not care to wash themselves too often, but whether this be so or not, during my short stay washing would have been impossible for me had I not carried my own soap. As typhus is a disease which is carried by lice, it is easy to understand how everything conspired to produce the sort of epidemic which has been running through the country for a considerable time.

In an interview with the Commissar of Public Health—N. A. Semashko—he informed me that in Moscow during the time of my visit things were much easier with regard to all diseases; that in Moscow and Petrograd the number of affected persons was down to 5,000; that there was a daily average for both towns together of 200 cases, and this was steadily falling. Both the Commissar and his assistants were confident that with the necessary disinfectants and a united effort on the part of the people, it would be possible to get through the spring without a very large

increase on these figures. But he pointed out that the springtime, even under the Czardom was always a bad time for epidemics, especially dysentery amongst children; he was very hopeful however that under the Soviets a very much reduced death rate would obtain than under the rule of the Czars.

Semashko went on to describe how in the provinces the business of Public Health was being organised. He asked us to understand that there had been very little local life in the villages; people were not allowed to interfere too much in the local government of Russia: consequently the Revolutionary Government was not only obliged to set up administrative machinery but was also obliged to supply the necessary men and women for carrying on the work. He expected to be able to establish Public Health Committees in every village, township and city throughout Russia. On these he was going to secure a majority of women as members because he was convinced that in Russia it was women who must first be taught the value of keeping their own bodies and the bodies of their children clean. It was a tremendous task which he had undertaken and he was glad to have this responsible work entrusted to him, but it would tax all the resources, not merely of himself but of thousands of efficient workers throughout the country, before the masses of people realised

the value and necessity of bathing and cleanliness generally. At present owing to the blockade and war it was impossible for the Government to supply the necessary means for securing baths or even a decent supply of water in some places, and there was certainly little or no soap for anybody.

We come right up against the blockade here, because it was not merely a question of the things I have mentioned, but disinfectants and medicines of all kinds had been cut off, so that his department worked with its hands tied behind it. For all this, very much had been done and very much more would be done within the next few months. They proposed to establish a Public Health Week during which, right throughout the country, public meetings and lectures would be held and the people encouraged to use all the means at their command, small as these may be, for the purpose of building up the health of the people.

He was careful to point out that the Russian Government was very anxious indeed to preserve the life of children. There are child welfare exhibitions in some towns. I went round one in Moscow with two fellow journalists: the exhibition was quite as good as anything I have seen in England and from a visit any intelligent mother could learn all

there is to learn about childbirth and the proper treatment of babies.

In connection with this department there are big stores, where the clothing and special food necessary for a child are supplied free. This sort of thing does not yet apply everywhere, but Semashko hopes very soon to have a child-welfare exhibition in every centre, not on a large scale but big enough to teach the things needed to be known about children.

It will be a mistake, however, to imagine that plague and pestilence is necessarily associated with the Bolsheviks. This Public Health Commissar is deliberately of opinion that the epidemics which have affected Moscow and Petrograd are directly attributable to the war and especially to the Red Army's having come into contact with the armies of Denikin and Koltchak. The authorities in Moscow consider that while the Red Army has been marching from victory to victory, they have had working side by side with them an army of devoted men and women, a sort of army of health whose business it is to fight disease. It is the Communists who make up this army: their work in times of epidemic is to bury those who die of disease, disinfect clothes and dwellings and generally take the lead wherever danger is involved. It is on record that when the Red troops took the town of Nicopol

they found 9,000 persons sick with typhus; dozens of dead were lying in the streets, in the cemeteries masses of human corpses were being eaten by dogs. They appealed to Moscow for help. Remember all this happened under the Denikin and Koltchak régimes. It is also stated that right throughout the Kazan region unheard of suffering was being endured. At Omsk 20,000 persons were discovered affected by spotted typhus: over 400 dead bodies were found unburied. It was expected that cholera would break out at Kharkoff.

The Communists took this situation in hand and first of all organised drastic measures to keep the Red Army free from disease. A new scheme drafted by the Public Health Department in co-operation with Lenin, was put into operation. Each regiment was called upon to elect a private who, with a doctor and the colonel, was held responsible for the good health of the regiment. All the sanitary arrangements were in their charge and they were made responsible for the proper cleanliness of billets and camps. A public health order of the day was issued as follows: "To be dirty is a crime against the revolution." Arrangements were made for special isolation stations capable of dealing with about 30,000 cases every day and providing beds for 5,000 patients. I repeat this all happened in districts recaptured from the reactionists who were

responsible for the terrible conditions with which the Bolsheviks were called upon to deal.

These theoretical Bolsheviks have also been practical enough to set up travelling baths which go round with their trains. No one, in certain parts of Russia is allowed to enter a train without first taking a bath. They have also made arrangements by which over a hundred thousand men of the Red Army are able to get a bath each day. The soldiers are given, not one set of clothing, but several, in order that clothing may be frequently cleansed. The result of all this is that to a very large extent the Red Army may be considered an army of health; whereas the Denikin and Koltchak armies by spreading disease may be called the armies of death. The task of the Red Army was to clear away disease brought into existence by the sheer neglect of the leaders of the counter revolution.

A Research Department under the supervision of Professor Lazareff, who has a big staff of men and women experts under him, is in full working order studying how to prevent and deal with disease. They have also been devising means for overcoming the effects of the devilish invention used by the Allies and the White Army against the Bolsheviks, an invention which blinds the soldiers in the trenches. These Russian specialists consider

that they have now devised means by which this weapon is now quite ineffective.

In a thousand and one ways, health services are being set up, but the one cry from everybody—specialists, doctors and nurses—was: "Throw down the blockade; let us have the means for alleviating suffering; let us have the means for preventing disease. It is impossible to establish effective public health administration unless we have these means: we can only get them from outside." Again and again protests were uttered against the infamy of the Allies, and especially against the International Red Cross, for its failure to send into Russia the means for dealing with the wounded and those stricken with disease. It was pointed out that the Denikin and Koltchack armies were always well supplied; that again and again the Bolsheviks had occupied a village or a town only to find all the medical stores burnt up, and I was asked: "By what sort of right did the International Red Cross, that gathers money from all sorts and conditions of people, defend the policy of assisting one side only in a great struggle like that through which Russia was passing?" It was also stated that in many places doctors were not allowed to remain to treat either the wounded or those suffering from disease, but that often they were carried

off by the White Armies at the point of the bayonet.

Semashko and his friends have no fear of to-morrow if only they are allowed their chance, but as with everything else in Russia, the future depends on peace. Given peace, this work of reorganising the civilian life of the people will be taken in hand, and there is no reason at all why Russia should not become one of the healthiest of the nations of Europe.

With regard to housing: that is a problem in Russia as everywhere else. The wretched working class dwellings of the great towns are themselves a standing example of the disgraceful manner in which the Czarist Government neglected the life of the people. Almost under the walls of the Kremlin and within sight of the most magnificent cathedral in Moscow there are slum districts, the like of which I should think could scarcely be found anywhere else in the world—except in the very worst quarters of industrial towns. Many of these have been destroyed since the revolution, having been pulled down and the wood used as fuel. Semashko hopes that these will never be rebuilt. He hopes that great areas of the cities will be cleared, for good and for all, and that an altogether new housing scheme will be adopted. This is, however, for the future: the whole work of his department, as far as efficiency and effectiveness is concerned, I

repeat, depends on peace. There can be no labour or material available for housing until the Red Armies become Labour Armies.

In spite of living in the midst of war, pestilence and famine, these Russian Bolshevists, theorists and dreamers as they are called, are proving they know how to organise and that with idealism they also carry a complete knowledge of all that is needed not merely to govern but to administer the social life of a great nation by the co-operative help of the whole body of citizens.

## CHAPTER XI

### MOSCOW TO LONDON

I LEFT Moscow on Saturday, February 28th, at mid-day. Accompanying me were two British soldiers who were being released owing to ill-health. They had been placed in my charge by the Soviet Government. We were a merry party on the platform. To see us off were the British chaplain and two or three other friends of the soldiers, my interpreter and guide, Comrade Rosenberg, and my colleague Griffin Barry, who looked very disconsolate and sorry for himself as he waved good-bye when the train started. Several officials were to travel with us to Petrograd on their way to Reval. We also had the company of Michael Farbman and Joe Fineberg. As on my way out, places had been reserved in an ordinary carriage, in no way different from any other coach on the train. As usual a great crowd of people were in every compartment.

We had just settled down to make ourselves comfortable when the train stopped. We took no notice of this, as trains in Russia stop at all sorts of times and places for no apparent reason. However, this time there was a reason : something had gone wrong with our carriage which compelled the officials to ask us to get out. The coach was taken off, the brakes would not act. As there was no other coach available, the problem we had to face was how to find room for eight or nine persons in a train already over full, with people hanging on to buffers, steps of carriages, and also on the footplate and tender of the engine. A saloon coach, formerly used on the Siberian railway, with accommodation for six people, was part of the train. It already had six passengers, but we asked to go in and were allowed to do so, and travelled for twenty hours, fifteen of us in a saloon built for six. We had no cooking utensils for tea making, so once more got through by borrowing first the Samovar, then cups and knives. Unfortunately, we could not borrow sleeping places, so when night came we loosened our clothes, wrapped ourselves in our coats and lay down on the floor with leather bags for our pillows. None of us suffered much, except from stiffness. I caught cold, which is usual for me whenever I sleep in abnormal places, and I only tell this story to controvert the lying

statement that great plans were made for my comfort and everything done to convince me that, as we say in East London, "everything in the garden's lovely" in Russia.

I stayed only a short time in Petrograd, meeting Zinovieff and a dozen other friends. I must tell of one first-class banquet I enjoyed. The occasion was my last night in Russia. An anarchist comrade who is helping Bill Shatoff in the work of organising the railways had just brought 45 trucks loaded with food into Petrograd. He asked me to supper, as he said, "to have a really nice meal." Well, I arrived at the appointed time and found my meal was to consist of some bacon, butter, white bread and tea. This was the luxurious meal in my honour, and it was a luxurious meal for anyone in Russia, and enjoyed by us all, and the story of it is written down here to give the lie to the statement that commissars and their friends live on the fat of the land. Neither of these friends had seen such bacon, butter and cheese for months. I had—but even so, the white bread and boiled bacon was more delicious than anything I had tasted for over a month. I went around Petrograd, looked at the churches, open spaces, most of all at the people, found the streets and everywhere else cleaner than in Moscow.

We left Petrograd at nine in the morning, reached the border at about 10.30, and found

ourselves once more the guests of Commissar Kokko and his wife. We were obliged to wait for the Finns till nearly five, so again a jolly party foregathered in the tiny dining room of their cottage. Here I saw the one and only diamond ring during my stay in Russia. A young woman acting as adjutant was the wearer. She could speak a little French and English, so we were able to talk. The British soldiers enjoyed the hours of waiting and were able to understand a little how the Bolshevik army was managed. While we waited an alarm was raised that a few hundred yards away the Finns were attacking. It turned out the White Finns were only engaged attacking birds.

The same formalities took place crossing as had been gone through when I entered Russia, except that the Finnish officers resolutely refused to allow the British soldiers to cross. Very reluctantly I went over alone and was driven to Raijoki, where I telephoned to the Commander-in-Chief of the District and secured permission for my friends to join me. The three of us on meeting at once went to the refreshment room, where I am sure we injured our digestions mopping up tea with milk and lovely white rolls and butter. The rolls, being new, were, of course, very nice and very indigestible. I ought to mention that when I went up the bank of the river and left my

friends, a group of about a score of my Red friends, led by Comrade Fineberg, gave me a cheer and shouted messages of greeting to British comrades. It was nice to hear in that country and under such conditions the familiar clarion greeting "Boots" and "Spurs."

Our troubles began at Raijoki Station. I took rail tickets for Helsingfors. Then suddenly an officer appeared in order to search us and our luggage. After this, the soldiers were told they must go to Terijoki for quarantine, but I could travel on. So once more we parted, I intending to see the British Minister at Helsingfors and get my friends out. Alas for poor me! I only got about twenty miles on the road when four bright looking youths appeared. They were fully armed and accompanied by an officious sort of officer person, who ordered me to alight. After some minutes, during which I tried to make a fuss, I got out, to be told that they were instructed to take me to quarantine. As is usual with the most Christian person as well as with pagans like myself, my temper rose, and for some time I sat in a cloak-room refusing to move. I knew the quarantine station was a good mile and a half or so away and did not intend to walk. This at last dawned on my captors, and they produced a droshky, into which four of us and my bags tumbled, and off we went, arriving at the camp about twelve midnight.

In my life-time, I have done "time" for a political offence. I have travelled for eight weeks on an emigrant steamer, found myself housed in an emigrant's house in Brisbane, lived with a wife and family in the wilds of Queensland, as a young man worked amongst coal porters here at home; but nowhere in all the world have I come across so filthy a hole as the so-called quarantine camp at Terijoki, Finland. The walls of the huts were covered with the dust and dirt of ages, the bed rugs and clothing had the appearance of not having been washed for a century, the sanitary arrangements were loathsome, and as for food, there was practically none. Inmates were expected to provide and cook for themselves. No pots, pans or utensils of any sort or kind were supplied. My soldier friends who had endured hardships under the Bolsheviks were now able to enjoy the luxury of prison treatment at the hands of a friendly government and, like me, they hated it. A person in this place without money would simply starve, not as in Russia because of shortage but for the very simple reason that the White Finns hate the Red Russians, and those interned are all suspected of being Reds.

As for quarantine, there was none. The last comers were mixed with the first—in fact, the place was a disease factory.

The morning following my arrival, I wired an angry protest to the British Minister at Helsingfors, and sent similar messages to the Finnish Foreign Minister and my Finnish Socialist comrades. In addition, I tried to wire to Lloyd George and the *Daily Herald*, but these telegrams were not despatched.

To say I was alarmed is only to say the bare truth. I was expecting to get the very diseases from which the authorities were pretending to protect me and others. In addition, every time I moved, an armed soldier—a mere youth—accompanied me. And as I know how thoroughly hated I was by reactionary Finns and White Russians, I expected every day to be shot or otherwise put away by accident.

To people who travel in Scandinavia, vapour or steam baths are taken as a matter of course. I was ordered to take one in a sort of stable house about ten minutes' walk from the hut in which I was detained. For some days my throat had been giving me trouble, so I jibbed at a vapour bath with a ten minutes' walk to follow. Two fully armed soldiers, a nurse, and a matron appeared and tried to coerce me, but obstinacy won, and for a day or two I was left alone.

On the third day a delegation from Helsingfors appeared representing the British Army, the British Consul and the Red Cross. After a wrangle, I was removed to what is

called, for want of a better name, a hospital, accompanied by my two soldier friends. Here things were slightly better. At least our food was served on plates and we had mugs out of which to drink. But dirt, cobwebs, etc., were visible in this place also. The bath was attached to the house, so in I went—to find myself in an atmosphere something like a steam laundry when the steam has escaped. Once inside, I discovered that it was usual to be accompanied by an aged woman whose business it is to scrub the backs of the bathers and assist generally in removing dirt. So naturally did this woman offer her assistance that I almost succumbed to her endeavours to persuade me to allow her to carry out her duties. But being born in England and consequently unduly modest, it was impossible to bring myself to allow her to do the job. When I left the bath, I had to run the gauntlet of a laughing good-natured group of women, to whom the story of my conduct had no doubt been told.

This incident shows how natural the relationships between men and women are in these countries. I am certain if I told in England that such things happen in Russia, many people ignorant of the fact that it is a custom in Finland and other Scandinavian countries will at once cry out about the immorality and vice of the Bolsheviks.

After five days and six nights at the disease factory we were set free. I parted with my soldier friends, who travelled alone from Terijoki to Copenhagen. I went on to Helsingfors and was once more royally received. I met the Socialists and Communist members of the Diet, addressed a great demonstration on behalf of peace with Russia, spoke at a big brotherhood meeting under the chairmanship of Pastor Sirenius, met many official and unofficial friends, and at last packed up for Stockholm, where I met Comrades Strom and Wallenius, and some paper merchants with whom I was able to do business. The Swedish comrades gave a supper party in my honour, and, as at Helingsfors, I gave interviews and wrote articles for the Press. In Copenhagen I met Litvinoff and found him still in difficulties with the British authorities. I also met a group of Single Tax friends, who met me at a supper given by Mr. and Mrs. Bjornen.

The treatment of Litvinoff, the Russian Ambassador, by the British authorities will be remembered for all time as one of the most mean and despicable incidents in a long campaign of vilification and calumny. It would appear as if the British Foreign Office, acting in league with the jingoes of France, are determined to sabotage every attempt which is made either for trade or peace. One diplomat explained

matters to me thus: "The Allied Governments have no moral relationships with the Russian Government. We are only negotiating on a material basis." What exactly he intended to convey is not for me to determine; it is obvious, though, if words mean anything, that Britain was willing to trade but not willing to make peace.

Litvinoff and his colleagues long for peace, but they desire a just peace as between equals. If the Allies persist in thinking of Lenin, Litvinoff and others as scoundrels and thieves, then no peace is possible. Litvinoff may have broken diplomatic conventions while in London: that is the worst that can be charged against him; but so also have a score and more of Allied representatives in Russia. It is time a halt was called to these grotesque personalities and Europe started with a clean slate. I saw enough of the workings of diplomacy in Copenhagen to realise that if the British workers understood the dirty game of make-believe which men, quite honourable in other walks of life, play as diplomats, they would rise up and sweep the whole Foreign Office away, with all its traditional hypocrisy and humbug.

Will it be believed that in Copenhagen, after James O'Grady's return, no one was left who had any power either to speak or write to Litvinoff on behalf of the British Govern-

ment? The charge d'affaires could only communicate in an unofficial manner through unofficial channels. The consequence of all this was gross misunderstanding and delay in handling the negotiations for trade.

It will be of interest to many people to know that Litvinoff, this much abused man, is a homely, kindly man living with his wife and two babies in Copenhagen. He gives eighteen hours a day to the service of his country, takes no leisure or pleasure, finding his whole satisfaction in life by serving his country to the very fullest extent of his powers.

I arrived home on Friday, March 19th, having been out of England exactly nine weeks. My reception at Harwich by members of the local Labour Party and in London at Liverpool Street was most cordial and enthusiastic. I can never forget the fact that a great crowd of those with whom I have lived and toiled, lost time and money to welcome me back. May we all go forward together as a united body continuing to work for the coming day when co-operation will be the law of life.

# APPENDIX

# APPENDIX

## OATH TAKEN BY THE RED ARMY ON ENLISTMENT AND RENEWED ON MAY DAY EACH YEAR

BEFORE the working classes of Russia and of the whole world I swear to bear my calling honourably; to perform my training conscientiously; and zealously to guard public and military property from damage or loss.

I swear straightly and unflinchingly to observe revolutionary discipline, and unhesitatingly to obey all the orders of the commanders appointed by the Workers' and Peasants' Government.

I swear to abstain myself and withhold my comrades from all actions lowering to the dignity of a citizen of the Soviet Republic; to direct all my actions and thoughts towards the great aim of the liberation of all the workers.

I swear, at the first call of the Workers' and Peasants' Government, to come to the defence of the Soviet Republic against all perils and attacks by any of its foes, and, in battle for the Russian Soviet Republic, for the work of Socialism and the brotherhood of the peoples, to spare neither my energies nor my life itself.

If by malicious intent I break this my solemn promise, then may universal contempt be my lot, and may I be punished by the stern hand of the revolutionary law.

## THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

SINCE my return to England there has been much discussion in Socialist and Labour circles on the question of violence and the Third International. I discussed both these points with Lenin rather fully. He knows I am a pacifist and said to me: "You are a Christian, I am not; I am an Atheist. You think you can accomplish the revolution without violence, I think you will not be able to do so. If in England you are able to do this, well and good. No one wants bloodshed merely for bloodshed's sake, but it is neces-

sary that the workers must arm in order to obtain the revolution. The workers must arm to protect the revolution because I do not believe the capitalist class will give in without a fight."

On the question of Parliamentary action on lines such as obtain in England, I argued that we had all the machinery of government and administration; that we had our great trade union and co-operative movement and friendly societies; that all these organisations, national, municipal and voluntary are training men and women for the work of administration, and that it would be quite easy for us to take over whenever the workers really desire to do so. I gave as an instance of what I meant the Poplar Borough Council, where we have an almost solid representation made up of Labour men and women—people who actually work with their hands. I asked him whether we ought to give up all this work, and most emphatically he replied "No"; that we should all remain in every organisation, learn all we can, and use them, of course, as means of propaganda and experiment.

As to my pacifism and my hatred of violence, he said he could understand it and could appreciate it, and what he was anxious to know was on which side should I be in the event of a revolution. My reply was that always I should be on the side of the workers.

I did not gather that because I was a pacifist I should be excluded from the Third International—in fact, I understood both from Lenin, Fineberg and Zinovieff that I should be accepted as a member although I could not accept the policy of armed revolution.

I think that I should emphasise the fact that Lenin most definitely is of opinion, not that the workers want to fight or that he and his friends want to fight but that the capitalists will make them fight; and always he gave as an instance the fact that in Britain Sir Edward Carson was allowed to raise and equip an army of over one hundred thousand men and was supported by all the leading Tories. By so doing he was able to defeat an Act of Parliament which had not only passed the legislature but had received the signature of the King.

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